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THE MESSAGE OF THE TREES

MAUD CUNEY HARE

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THE MESSAGE OF THE TREES

THE MESSAGE OF THE TREES

AN ANTHOLOGY OF LEAVES AND BRANCHES

BY

MAUD CUNEY HARE

WITH A FOREWORD

BY

WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

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TO MY LITTLE DAUGHTER

VERA

1900–1908

Here are the budding boughs again,
  But where the budding child,
That from green slopes to greener shores
  Last April was beguiled?

O little life, with all thy buds
  Close-folded-laid in death;
Would they had oped in bloom and fruit,
  About thy mother's path.

Ethelwyn Wetherald.

INTRODUCTION

There may be found on earth a person so perverse that he hates a tree, but I doubt if even among the lowest such a being exists. In a tree there is something more than mortal.

It is difficult for the mind to conceive of a giant redwood,—the oldest living thing in the world, towering high above the forest, its great roots firmly imbedded in the native soil, sentient, calm, inscrutable,—as a lesser creature than man. The majesty of its misty centuries that have seen not only nations and empires but ages come and go, clothe it with a touch of the infinite, for surely such as it dare grasp at the meaning of eternity.

We do not wonder that "the groves were God's first temples;" we only wonder at the folly of man who has dreamed that God could ever be worshiped in a more fitting temple than a grove. For there, all the beauty, the spirituality, the poetry that has its finest expression in the desire of man to pay a willing tribute of love to the Deity, is framed in a perfect setting.

The petty, narrow, dogmatic differences that crowd uncomfortably the angular box-like structures of so many of our ecclesiastical buildings, would be lost in a temple whose roof was the firmament, and congregations and religion itself would be healthier for the change.

The poets and the thinkers of the ages have never failed to grasp the intimate relationship existing between trees and man. Many of the finest things in literature of the world have had their inspiration in a tree.

Mrs. Hare has been very fortunate in her choice of selections for the present volume, which I feel sure will make a decided addition to the list of anthologies of real worth and will fill a decided want among the countless lovers of trees.

William Stanley Braithwaite.

Cambridge, Mass.

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THE LEAFY WORLD

"At the dawn of history began The Adoration of the Trees."

James Lane Allen.

"Of all man's works of art, a cathedral is the greatest. A vast and majestic tree is greater than that."

Henry Ward Beecher.

AMONG THE TREES

15563

Oh ye who love to overhang the springs,
And stand by running waters, ye whose boughs
Make beautiful the rocks o'er which they play,
Who pile with foliage the great hills, and rear
A paradise upon the lonely plain,
Trees of the forest, and the open field!
Have ye no sense of being? Does the air,
The pure air, which I breathe with gladness, pass
In gushes o'er your delicate lungs, your leaves,
All unenjoyed? When on your winter's sleep
The sun shines warm, have ye no dreams of spring?
And when the glorious spring-time comes at last,
Have ye no joy of all your bursting buds,
And fragrant blooms, and melody of birds
To which your young leaves shiver? Do ye strive
And wrestle with the wind, yet know it not?
Feel ye no glory in your strength when he,
The exhausted Blusterer, flies beyond the hills,
And leaves you stronger yet? Or have ye not
A sense of loss when he has stripped your leaves,
Yet tender, and has splintered your fair boughs?
Does the loud bolt that smites you from the cloud
And rends you, fall unfelt? Do there not run
Strange shudderings through your fibres when the axe
Is raised against you, and the shining blade
Deals blow on blow, until, with all their boughs,
Your summits waver and ye fall to earth?
Know ye no sadness when the hurricane
Has swept the wood and snapped its sturdy stems
Asunder, or has wrenched, from out the soil,
The mightiest with their circles of strong roots,
And piled the ruin all along his path?

Nay, doubt we not that under the rough rind,
In the green veins of these fair growths of earth,
There dwells a nature that receives delight
From all the gentle processes of life,

And shrinks from loss of being. Dim and faint
May be the sense of pleasure and of pain,
As in our dreams; but, haply, real still.

Ye have no history. I cannot know
Who, when the hillside trees were hewn away
Haply two centuries since, bade spare this oak,
Leaning to shade, with his irregular arms,
Low-bent and long, the fount that from his roots
Slips through a bed of cresses toward the bay—
I know not who, but thank him that he left
The tree to flourish where the acorn fell,
And join these later days to that far time
While yet the Indian hunter drew the bow
In the dim woods, and the white woodman first
Opened these fields to sunshine, turned the soil
And strewed the wheat. An unremembered Past
Broods, like a presence, mid the long gray boughs
Of this old tree, which has outlived so long
The flitting generations of mankind.

Ye have no history. I ask in vain
Who planted on the slope this lofty group
Of ancient pear-trees that with spring-time burst
Into such breadth of bloom. One bears a scar
Where the quick lightning scored its trunk, yet still
It feels the breath of Spring, and every May
Is white with blossoms. Who it was that laid
Their infant roots in earth, and tenderly
Cherished the delicate sprays, I ask in vain,
Yet bless the unknown hand to which I owe
This annual festival of bees, these songs
Of birds within their leafy screen, these shouts
Of joy from children gathering up the fruit
Shaken in August from the willing boughs.

Ye that my hands have planted, or have spared,
Beside the way, or in the orchard-ground,
Or in the open meadow, ye whose boughs
With every summer spread a wider shade,
Whose herd in coming years shall lie at rest
Beneath your noontide shelter? who shall pluck

Your ripened fruit? who grave, as was the wont
Of simple pastoral ages, on the rind
Of my smooth beeches some beloved name?
Idly I ask; yet may the eyes that look
Upon you, in your later, nobler growth,
Look also on a nobler age than ours;
An age when, in the eternal strife between
Evil and Good, the Power of Good shall win
A grander mastery; when kings no more
Shall summon millions from the plough to learn
The trade of slaughter, and of populous realms
Make camps of war; when in our younger land
The hand of ruffian Violence, that now
Is insolently raised to smite, shall fall
Unnerved before the calm rebuke of Law,
And Fraud, his sly confederate, shrink, in shame,
Back to his covert, and forego his prey.

Bryant.

TREES

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Joyce Kilmer.

TREE FEELINGS

I wonder if they like it—being trees?
I suppose they do. . . .
It must feel good to have the ground so flat,
And feel yourself stand right straight up like that—
So stiff in the middle—and then branch at ease,
Big boughs that arch, small ones that bend and blow,
And all those fringy leaves that flutter so.
You'd think they'd break off at the lower end
When the wind fills them, and their great heads bend.
But then you think of all the roots they drop,
As much at bottom as there is on top,—
A double tree, widespread in earth and air
Like a reflection in the water there.

I guess they like to stand still in the sun
And just breathe out and in, and feel the cool sap run;
And like to feel the rain run through their hair
And slide down to the roots and settle there.
But I think they like wind best. From the light touch
That lets the leaves whisper and kiss so much,
To the great swinging, tossing, flying wide,
And all the time so stiff and strong inside!
And the big winds, that pull, and make them feel
How long their roots are, and the earth how leal!

And O the blossoms! And the wild seeds lost!
And jewelled martyrdom of fiery frost!
And fruit trees. I'd forgotten. No cold gem,
But to be apples—and bow down with them!

Charlotte Perkins Stetson.

FRANCE

She triumphs; in the vivid green
Where sun and quivering foliage meet;
And in each soldier's heart serene:
  When death stood near them they have seen
  The radiant forests where her feet
  Move on a breeze of silver sheen.

And they are fortunate, who fight
For gleaming landscapes swept and shafted
And crowned by cloud-pavilions white;
  Hearing such harmonies as might
  Only from heaven be downward wafted—
  Voices of victory and delight.

Siegfried Sassoon.

TREES IN THE NIGHT

[*From The man whom the Trees loved.*]

"For trees, you see, rather conceal themselves in daylight. They reveal themselves fully only after sunset. I never *know* a tree, until I've seen it in the night.

'The Night transfigures all things in a way,' he was saying; 'but nothing so searchingly as trees. From behind a veil that sunlight hangs before them in the day they emerge and show themselves. Even buildings do that—in a measure—but trees particularly. In the daytime they sleep; at night they wake, they manifest, turn active—live. You remember,' turning politely again in the direction of his hostess, 'how clearly Henley understood that?'

He quoted in a low voice the lines he meant. It was, for once, the time, the place, and the setting all together. The words floated out across the lawn towards the wall of blue darkness where the big Forest swept the little garden with its league-long curve that was like the shore-line of a sea. A wave of distant sound that was like surf accompanied his voice, as though the wind was fain to listen too:

Not to the staring Day,
For all the importunate questionings he pursues
In his big, violent voice,

Shall those mild things of bulk and multitude,
The trees—God's sentinels . . .
Yield of their huge, unutterable selves.

. . . . . .

But at the word
Of the ancient, sacerdotal Night,
Night of the many secrets, whose effect—
Transfiguring, hierophantic, dread—
Themselves alone may fully apprehend,
They tremble and are changed:
In each the uncouth, individual soul
Looms forth and glooms
Essential, and, their bodily presences
Touched with inordinate significance,
Wearing the darkness like a livery
Of some mysterious and tremendous guild,
They brood—they menace—they apall."

Algernon Blackwood.

THE TREE

O fair and forest tree
Where shall your great hands be,
In depths of shadows black
Or rest in air?

And shall you hold the stain
Of sunlight or of rain
When I walk down the wood
And find you there?

And shall the moonlight soft
O'er swathe thee from aloft
Like any faithful saint
To reverence wed?

Or shall the thunder crash,
And wave its burning lash,
Leaving a hundred monarchs
Stricken and dead?

Harold Bullard.

THE SOUL OF A TREE

Our sense of fellowship with the trees is in part instinctive. It may have remained in the blood from the time that our ancestors lived and worshipped in the groves, nay, worshipped the trees themselves. A sense of fellowship with the trees may be deep in our nature; dormant only, it is but too likely, in those who are closely confined in our overgrown towns and cities; ready to awake again if the companionship of trees should happily be granted them again.

I have been enough among the trees, and have planned and worked enough among them, to have come to know them intimately, to grieve if one must go, almost to grieve if, for the good of a tree, a branch must come out, to give the new wood a chance; or to let another tree, that is being injured by a more strongly growing neighbour, have more room; and my heart sinks whenever I think that some day I may have to leave these humble friends of mine to the care or the neglect of others. Here, though I have called them humble, they seem, in more than their height, to rise above me. By their silent endurance, by their mere length of years, by their naturalness, they soothe and strengthen. Though the tree has not a soul, it is to me as if it had. Individual trees have their own character. We may say simply that this is an oak, that a beech, and that an elm; as we distinguish Englishman, Frenchman and German. But the tree lover goes further than this; as we do also with our fellows when we know them intimately. Not every oak has just the same appearance of rugged strength. Not every silver birch is just as graceful as every other. Like us, too, they are creatures of habit; and their habits become fixed; from which quality of theirs many a moral lesson has been drawn for the benefit of human saplings. Have we not also fruitful trees and unfruitful trees; the latter, however, being fruitful, at least, in homilies? Also do not the trees aid each other and injure each other? Are not some of them social in their habit and others markedly individualistic? And when the trees live together in companies, must not each part with something of its liberty as the price of social companionship?

J. Ernest Phythian.

THE GARDEN

When we have run our passion's heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat.
The gods, that mortal beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race;
Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that she might laurel grow;
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

A. Marvell.

TREES

Trees are indeed the glory, the beauty, and the delight of nature. In what one imaginable attribute, that it ought to possess, is a tree, pray, deficient? Light, shade, shelter, coolness, freshness, music, all the colours of the rainbow, dew and dreams dropping through their umbrageous twilight at eve or morn,—dropping direct, soft, sweet, soothing, and restorative, from heaven. Without trees, how in the name of wonder could we have had houses, ships, bridges, easy-chairs, or coffins, or almost any single one of the necessaries, conveniences, or comforts of life? Without trees, one man might have been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, but not another with a wooden ladle.

Tree by itself Tree, "such tents the patriarchs loved,"—Ipsenemus,—"the brotherhood of Trees,"—the Grove, the Coppice, the Wood, the Forest,—dearly, and after a different fashion, do we love you all!—And love you all we shall, while our dim eyes can catch the glimmer, our dull ears the murmur, of the leaves, or our imagination hear at midnight, the far-off swing of old branches groaning in the tempest. Oh! is not Merry also Sylvan England? And has not Scotland, too, her old pine forests, blackening up her Highland mountains? Are not many of her rivered valleys not unadorned with woods,—her braes beautiful with their birken shaws? And does not stately ash or sycamore tower above the kirk-spire in many a quiet glen, overshadowing the humble house of God, "the dial-stone aged and green," and all the deep-sunk, sinking, or upright array of grave-stones, beneath which

"The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep"?

John Wilson.

"DRAW CLOSER, O YE TREES"

O quiet cottage room,
Whose casements, looking o'er the garden-close,
Are hid in wildings and the woodbine bloom
And many a clambering rose,

Sweet is thy light subdued,
Gracious and soft, lingering upon my book,
As that which shimmers through the branchèd wood
Above some dreamful nook!

Leaning within my chair,
Through the thin curtain I can see the stir—
The gentle undulations of the air—
Sway the dark-layered fir;

And, in the beechen green,
Mark many a squirrel romp and chirrup loud;
While far beyond, the chestnut-boughs between,
Floats the white summer cloud.

Through loopholes in the leaves,
Upon the yellow slopes of far-off farms,
I see the rhythmic cradlers, and the sheaves
Gleam in the binders' arms.

At times I note, near by,
The flicker tapping on some hollow bole;
And watch upon the elm, against the sky,
The fluting oriole;

Or, when the day is done,
And the warm splendors make the oak-top flush,
Hear him, full-throated in the setting sun,—
The darling wildwood thrush.

O sanctuary shade
Enfold me round! I would no longer roam:
Let not the thought of wandering e'er invade
This still, reclusive home!

Draw closer, O ye trees!
Veil from my sight e'en the loved mountain's blue;
The world may be more fair beyond all these,
Yet I would know but you!

Lloyd Mifflin.

THE MESSAGE OF THE TREES

"What are these maples and beeches and birches but odes and idyls and madrigals? What are these pines and firs and spruces but holy hymns?"

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

THE VOICE OF THE PINE

'Tis night upon the lake. Our bed of boughs
Is built where, high above, the pine-tree soughs.
'Tis still—and yet what woody noises loom
Against the background of the silent gloom!
One well might hear the opening of a flower
If day were hushed as this. A mimic shower
Just shaken from a branch, how large it sounded,
As 'gainst our canvas roof its three drops bounded!
Across the rumpling waves the hoot-owl's bark
Tolls forth the midnight hour upon the dark.
What mellow booming from the hills doth come?—
The mountain quarry strikes its mighty drum.

Long had we lain beside our pine-wood fire,
From things of sport our talk had risen higher.
How frank and intimate the words of men
When tented lonely in some forest glen!
No dallying now with masks, from whence emerges
Scarce one true feature forth. The night-wind urges
To straight and simple speech. So we had thought
Aloud; no secrets but to light were brought.
The hid and spiritual hopes, the wild
Unreasoned longings that, from child to child,
Mortals still cherish (though with modern shame)—
To these, and things like these, we gave a name;
And as we talked, the intense and resinous fire
Lit up the towering boles, till nigh and nigher
They gather round, a ghostly company,
Like beasts who seek to know what men may be.

Then to our hemlock beds, but not to sleep—
For listening to the stealthy steps that creep
About the tent, or falling branch, but most
A noise was like the rustling of a host,
Or like the sea that breaks upon the shore—

It was the pine-tree's murmur. More and more
It took a human sound. These words I felt
Into the skyey darkness float and melt:—
"Heardst thou these wanderers reasoning of a time
When men more near the Eternal One shall climb?
How like the new-born child who cannot tell
A mother's arm that wraps it warm and well!
Leaves of His rose; drops in His sea that flow,—
Are they, alas, so blind they may not know
Here in this breathing world of joy and fear,
They can no nearer get to God than here?"

Richard Watson Gilder.

WOODNOTES

As sunbeams stream through liberal space
And nothing jostle or displace,
So waved the pine-tree through my thought
And fanned the dreams it never brought.

'What prizes the town and the tower?
Only what the pine-tree yields;
Sinew that subdued the fields;
The wild-eyed boy, who in the woods
Chants his hymn to hills and floods,
Whom the city's poisoning spleen
Made not pale, or fat, or lean;
Whom the rain and the wind purgeth,
Whom the dawn and the day-star urgeth,
In whose cheek the rose-leaf blusheth,
In whose feet the lion rusheth,
Iron arms, and iron mould,
That know not fear, fatigue or cold.
I give my rafters to his boat,
My billets to his boiler's throat,
And I will swim the ancient sea
To float my child to victory,
And grant to dwellers with the pine
Dominion o'er the palm and vine.
Who leaves the pine-tree, leaves his friend,
Unnerves his strength, invites his end.

Cut a bough from my parent stem,
And dip it in thy porcelain vase;
A little while each russet gem
Will swell and rise with wonted grace;
But when it seeks enlarged supplies,
The orphan of the forest dies.
Whoso walks in solitude
And inhabiteth the wood,
Choosing light, wave, rock and bird,
Before the money-loving herd,
Into that forester shall pass,
From these companions power and grace.

'Heed the old oracles
Ponder my spells;
Song wakes in my pinnacles
When the wind swells.
Soundeth the prophetic wind,
The shadows shake on the rock behind,
And the countless leaves of the pine are strings
Tuned to the lay the wood-god sings.
Hearken! Hearken!
If thou wouldst know the mystic song
Chanted when the sphere was young.
Aloft, abroad, the paean swells;
O wise man! hear'st thou half it tells?
O wise man! hear'st thou the least part?
'Tis the chronicle of art.
To the open ear it sings
Sweet the genesis of things,
Of tendency through endless ages,
Of star-dust and star-pilgrimages,
Of rounded worlds, of space and time,
Of the old flood's subsiding slime,
Of chemic matter, force and form,
Of poles and powers, cold, wet and warm:
The rushing metamorphosis
Dissolving all that fixture is,
Melts things that be to things that seem,
And solid nature to a dream.
O, listen to the undersong,
The ever old, the ever young;

And, far within those cadent pauses,
The chorus of the ancient Causes!
Delights the dreadful Destiny
To fling his voice into the tree,
And shock thy weak ear with a note
Breathed from the everlasting throat.
In music he repeats the pang
Whence the fair flock of Nature sprang.
O mortal! thy ears are stones;
These echoes are laden with tones
Which only the pure can hear;
Thou canst not catch what they recite
Of Fate and Will, of Want and Right,
Of man to come, of human life,
Of Death and Fortune, Growth and Strife.'

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

THE TREE'S WAY

The high trees are honest folk;
They do not stand so much aloof
Up under heaven's roof,
Altho they are earth's fairest cloak.
Their lives are very calm and slow;
They wait for coming things to come,
They wait, they rest, they ponder some
Purpose forgotten long ago
Like quiet folk;
And sometimes I am moved to stroke
Hand-greeting as I pass them near,
And often I am sure I hear
An answer from these stately folk!

George Cronyn.

THE TREES

There's something in a noble tree—
  What shall I say? a soul?
For 't is not form, nor aught we see
  In leaf, or branch, or bole.
Some presence, though not understood,
  Dwells there alway, and seems
To be acquainted with our mood,
  And mingles in our dreams.

I would not say that trees at all
Were of our blood and race,
Yet, lingering where their shadows fall,
I sometimes think I trace
A kinship, whose far-reaching root
Grew when the world began,
And made them best of all things mute
To be the friends of man.

Held down by whatsoever might
Unto an earthly sod,
They stretch forth arms for air and light,
As we do after God;
And when in all their boughs the breeze
Moans loud, or softly sings,
As our own hearts in us, the trees
Are almost human things.

What wonder in the days that burned
With old poetic dream,
Dead Phaëthon's fair sisters turned
To poplars by the stream!
In many a light cotillion stept
The trees when fluters blew;
And many a tear, 't is said, they wept
For human sorrow, too.

Mute, said I? They are seldom thus;
They whisper each to each,
And each and all of them to us,
In varied forms of speech.
"Be serious," the solemn pine
Is saying overhead;
"Be beautiful," the elm-tree fine
Has always finely said;

"Be quick to feel," the aspen still
Repeats the whole day long;
While, from the green slope of the hill,
The oak-tree adds, "Be strong."

When with my burden, as I hear
Their distant voices call,
I rise, and listen, and draw near,
"Be patient," say they all.

Samuel Valentine Cole.

THE TREES OF THE GARDEN

Ye who have passed Death's haggard hills; and ye
Whom trees that knew your sires shall cease to know
And still stand silent:—is it all a show,—
A wisp that laughs upon the wall?—decree
Of some inexorable supremacy
Which ever, as man strains his blind surmise
From depth to ominous depth, looks past his eyes,
Sphinx-faced with unabashèd augury?
Nay, rather question the Earth's self. Invoke
The storm-felled forest-trees moss-grown to-day
Whose roots are hillocks where the children play;
Or ask the silver sapling 'neath what yoke
Those stars, his spray-crown's clustering gems, shall wage
Their journey still when his boughs shrink with age.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

AMONG THE PINES

The earnest pines are of the sober North.
Cold twilights find them sombre as themselves,
And the gold sun that down the red West delves
Like broken-lancéd knights doth set them forth.

There is among them only Autumn cheer,
A mournful sweetness—yet they do not change,
And their laced limbs are never bare and strange
Under the swift reprisals of the year.

If constancy brings melancholy joy,
This, then, is why these forests reach my heart
With their deep changeless tones, why tears do start
To-night when I behold their brave deploy.

Their constancy brings feelings linked to those
The soul brought here, and keeps beyond life's close.

Arthur Upson.

THE FOUNTS OF SONG

"What is the song I am singing?"—
Answered the pine-tree to the wave:
"Do you not know the song
You have sung so long
Down in the dim green alleys of the sea,
And where the great blind tides go swinging
Mysteriously,
And where the countless herds of the billows are hurl'd
On all the wild and lonely beaches of the world?"

"Ah, Pine-Tree," sighed the wave,
"I have no song but what I catch from thee:
Far off I hear thy strain
Of infinite sweet pain
That floats along the lovely phantom land.
I sigh, and murmur it o'er and o'er and o'er,
When 'neath the slow compelling hand
That guides me back and far from the loved shore,
I wander long
Where never falls the breath of any song,
But only the loud, empty, crashing roar
Of seas swung this way and that for evermore."

"What is the song I am singing?"
Answered the poet to the pine:
"Do you not know the song
You have sung so long
Here in the dim green alleys of the woods
Where the wild winds go wandering in all moods,
And whisper often o'er and o'er,
Or in tempestuous roar
Their dark eternal secret evermore?"
"O Poet," said the Pine,
"Thine
Is that song!
Not mine!
I have known it, loved it, long!
Nothing I know of what the wild winds cry
Through dusk and storm and night,

Or prophesy
When tempests whirl us with their awful night.
Only, I know that when
The poet's voice is heard
Among the woods
The infinite pain from out the hearts of men
Is sweeter than the voice of wave or branch or bird
In these dumb solitudes."

Fiona Macleod.

THE WOOD GOD

I heard his step upon the moss;
I glimpsed his shadow in the stream;
And once I saw the brambles toss
Wherein he vanished like a dream.

A gaunt beech aimed a vicious stroke
Straight at my face, in wild alarm:
And then a chestnut and an oak
Struck at my head a frantic arm.

The brambles clutched at me; and fear
For one mad instant held me fast—
Just long enough to let me hear
His wind-like footsteps rustle past.

The brushwood made itself more dense,
And looped my feet with green delay;
And threatening me with violence,
The rocks and thorns opposed my way.

But still I followed: forward strained;
In spite of all the wood devised
To keep me back on him I gained—
The deity I had surprised.

The Genius of the wood, whose flute
Had led me far, at first, to see
The imprint of his form and foot
Upon the moss beneath the tree.

A bird piped warning and he fled:
I saw a gleam of gold and green:
The woodland held its breath for dread
That its great godhead should be seen.

If I could glimpse him, face to face,
And for a while the mystery hold,
What visions there might then take place!
What secrets of the woods be told!

And well I know that he was near
By that soft word the water said
Unto the rock; and by the fear
The wind unto the leaves betrayed.

And by the sign bough made to bough,
The secret signal, brusque and brief,
That said, "On guard! He's looking now!"
And pointed at me twig and leaf.

Then suddenly the way lay wide;
The brambles ceased to clutch and tear;
And even the grim trees shrunk aside,
And motioned me,—"He's there! he's there!"

A ruse!—I knew it for a ruse,
To thwart my search at last.—But I
Had been a fool to follow clues,
And let the god himself pass by.

And then the wood in mighty mirth
Laughed at me, all its bulk a-swing:
It reared and bent its giant girth
As though it'd done a clever thing.

But I—on whom its scorn was spent—
Said not a word but turned away:
To me this truth was evident—
No man may see the gods to-day.

Madison Cawein.

A BREAD-AND-BUTTER LETTER

There is a willow grows beside a pool,
  Its long gray branches sweep the marble rim
And from those waters shadowy and cool
  The stars shine large and dim.

From open valleys filled with little lakes
  All through the night a hundred breezes blow,
All through the night the little willow makes
  A whispering soft and low.

Here in the dusty street there are no trees
  To whisper, and the sky is dark and gray,
And yet I see the stars, I feel the breeze
  So far, so far away.

Alice Duer Miller.

FAMILY TREES

You boast about your ancient line,
But listen, stranger, unto mine:

You trace your lineage afar,
Back to the heroes of a war
Fought that a country might be free;
Yea, farther—to a stormy sea
Where winter's angry billows tossed,
O'er which your Pilgrim Fathers crossed.
Nay, more—through yellow, dusty tomes
You trace your name to English homes
Before the distant, unknown West
Lay open to a world's behest;
Yea, back to days of those Crusades
When Turk and Christian crossed their blades.
You point with pride to ancient names,
To powdered sires and painted dames;
You boast of this—your family tree;
Now listen, stranger, unto me:

When armored knights and gallant squires,
Your own beloved, honored sires,
Were in their infant's blankets rolled,
My father's youngest sons were old;
When they broke forth in infant tears
My fathers' heads were crowned with years,
Yea, ere the mighty Saxon host
Of which you sing had touched the coast,
Looked back as far as you look now.
Yea, when the Druids trod the wood,
My venerable fathers stood
And gazed through misty centuries
As far as even Memory sees.
When Britain's eldest first beheld
The light, my fathers then were eld.
You of the splendid ancestry,
Who boast about your family tree,

Consider, stranger, this of mine—
Bethink the lineage of a Pine.

Douglas Malloch.

THE LESSON OF A TREE

I should not take either the biggest or the most picturesque tree to illustrate it. Here is one of my favorites now before me, a fine yellow poplar, quite straight perhaps ninety feet high, and four feet thick at the butt. How strong, vital, enduring! how dumbly eloquent! What suggestions of imperturbability and *being,* as against the human trait of mere *seeming.* Then the qualities, almost emotional, palpably artistic, heroic, of a tree; so innocent and harmless, yet so savage. It *is,* yet says nothing. How it rebukes by its tough and equable serenity all weathers, this gusty-tempered little whiffet, man, that runs indoors at a mite of rain or snow. Science (or rather half-way science) scoffs at a reminiscence of dryad and hamadryad, and of trees speaking. But, if they don't, they do as well as most speaking, writing, poetry, sermons—or rather they do a great deal better. I should say indeed that those old dryad reminiscences are quite as true as any, and profounder than most reminiscences we get. ("Cut this out," as the quack mediciners say, and keep by you.) Go and sit in a grove or woods, with one or more of those voiceless companions, and read the foregoing, and think.

Walt Whitman.

TREES

"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

Genesis.

CATALOGUE OF TREES

And forth they pass with pleasure, forward led,
Joying to hear the birds' sweet harmony,
Which therein shrouded from the tempest's dread,
Seemed in their song to scorn the cruel sky;
Much can they praise the trees so straight and high,
The sailing pine, the cedar proud and tall,
The vine-prop elm, the poplar never dry,
The builder-oak, sole king of forests all;
The aspen good for staves; the cypress, funeral.

The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors
And poets sage; the fir that weepeth still,
The willow, worn of forlorn paramours,
The yew, obedient to the bender's will,
The birch for shafts, the sallow for the mill,
The myrrh sweet bleeding of the bitter wound,
The warlike beech, the ash for nothing ill,
The fruitful olive, and the plantane round,
The carver holm, the maple seldom inward sound.

Edmund Spenser.

THE APPLE

The apple-tree takes the rawness and wildness off any scene. On the top of a mountain, or in remote pastures, it sheds the sentiment of home. It never loses its domestic air, or lapses into a wild state. And in planting a homestead, or in choosing a building site for the new house, what a help it is to have a few old, maternal apple-trees near by; regular old grandmothers, who have seen trouble, who have been sad and glad through so many winters and summers, who have blossomed till the air about them is sweeter than elsewhere, and borne fruit till the grass beneath them has become thick and soft from their human contact, and who have nourished robins and finches in their branches till they have a tender, brooding look. The ground, the turf, the atmosphere of an old orchard, seem several stages nearer to man than

that of the adjoining field, as if the trees had given back to the soil more than they had taken from it; as if they had tempered the elements and attracted all the genial and beneficent influences in the landscape around.

An apple orchard is sure to bear you several crops beside the apple—There is the crop of sweet and tender reminiscences dating from childhood and spanning the seasons from May to October, and making the orchard a sort of outlying part of the household. You have played there as a child, mused there as a youth or lover, strolled there as a thoughtful sad-eyed man—Your father, perhaps, planted the trees, or reared them from the seed, and you yourself have pruned and grafted them, and worked among them, till every separate tree has a peculiar history and meaning in your mind."

John Burroughs.

THE MOUNTAIN ASH

The Mountain-ash
No eye can overlook, when 'mid a grove
Of yet unfaded trees she lifts her head
Decked with autumnal berries, that outshine
Spring's richest blossoms; and ye may have marked,
By a brook-side or solitary tarn,
How she her station doth adorn: the pool
Glows at her feet, and all the gloomy rocks
Are brightened round her.

William Wordsworth.

THE BANYAN TREE

The traveller in the South may see
A large wide-spreading banyan tree;
The ivies with a loving hold
The trunk and drooping limbs enfold;
Of every danger unafraid
Beneath the banyan's fostering shade.

Our lady is the banyan tree
To all this house. The ivies we.
Oh, may we never cease to share
Her watchful and protecting care!
May joy and dignity attend
Our Queen, our lady and our friend!

From the Chinese.

THE BIRCH-TREE AT LOSCHWITZ

At Loschwitz above the city
The air is sunny and chill;
The birch-trees and the pine-trees
Grow thick upon the hill.

Lone and tall, with silver stem,
A birch-tree stands apart;
The passionate wind of spring-time
Stirs in its leafy heart.

I lean against the birch-tree,
My arms around it twine;
It pulses, and leaps, and quivers,
Like a human heart to mine.

One moment I stand, then sudden
Let loose mine arms that cling:
O God! the lonely hillside,
The passionate wind of spring!

Amy Levy.

WHITE BIRCH IN WYOMING

A shrinking, frightened creature in despair,
At all that painted blaze of sun and sky,
She stands, so naked seeming to the air,
Where heat has drunk the living water dry.

The tender color of the verdant North,
The waterfall and streaming mists I know,
Where, from the winding valleys trooping forth,
Her Valkyr sisters hurry towards the snow.

Queen warrior women, silver mailed and white,
From mountain fastnesses which they command,
Bemoan her through the starry Northern night,
Brunhilda, girdled by the burning sand.

Willa Sibert Cather.

THE CHERRY TREE

The cherry tree stands where the fields lie low.
How lovely, how glossy, each tender shoot!
The delicate blossoms are white as snow,
And soft and pliant the young sprays grow,
And luscious and sweet is the ripened fruit.

Oh, cherry tree, how I envy thee,
As thou growest in bright unconscious beauty.
Oh, cherry tree, how I long to be
From petty worries and troubles free,
No longer a slave to tyrannous duty.

From the Chinese.

CYPRESSES

Upon the beetling edge of that dark rock
There stands a group of cypresses; not such
As, with a graceful spire and stirring life,
Pierce the pure heaven of your native vale
Whose branches the air plays among, but not
Disturbs, fearing to spoil the solemn grace;
But blasted and all wearily they stand,
One to another clinging; their weak boughs
Sigh as the wind buffets them, and they shake
Beneath its blasts—a weatherbeaten crew!

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

THE HOLLY TREE

O READER! hast thou ever stood to see
    The Holly Tree?
The eye that contemplates it well perceives
    Its glossy leaves
Order'd by an Intelligence so wise,
As might confound the atheist's sophistries.

Below, a circling fence, its leaves are seen
    Wrinkled and keen;
No grazing cattle through their prickly round
    Can reach to wound;
But as they grow where nothing is to fear,
Smooth and unarm'd the pointless leaves appear.

I love to view these things with curious eyes,
And moralize:
And in this wisdom of the Holly Tree
Can emblems see
Wherewith perchance to make a pleasant rhyme,
One which may profit in the aftertime.

Thus, though abroad perchance I might appear
Harsh and austere,
To those who on my leisure would intrude,
Reserved and rude,
Gentle at home amid my friends I'd be
Like the high leaves upon the Holly Tree.

And should my youth, as youth is apt, I know,
Some harshness show,
All vain asperities I day by day
Would wear away,
Till the smooth temper of my age should be
Like the high leaves upon the Holly Tree.

And as when all the summer trees are seen
So bright and green,
The holly leaves a sober hue display
Less bright than they,
But when the bare and wintry woods we see,
What then so cheerful as the Holly Tree?

So serious should my youth appear among
The thoughtless throng,
So would I seem among the young and gay
More grave than they,
That in my age as cheerful I might be
As the green winter of the Holly Tree.

Robert Southey.

THE MAPLE-TREE

Day after day I travel down
From Billerica to the town;
Day after day, in passing by
A cedar-pasture, gray and high,
See, shining clear and far, (a mile),
The white church-steeple of Carlisle;
And bright between Carlisle and me,
Daily a glowing maple-tree.
Suffused with yellow, every part
Is burning saffron at the heart.
Upwards and warm the colors gain
From ruddy gold to claret-stain;
And downward tending, lightly lean
To citron yellow and cold green.
Day after autumn day it still
More deeply burns against the hill.
And now I've made of it a type
Of hopes, like mine, near autumn-ripe,
And watch intent, which first shall be,
The consummation of the tree,
Or that gold harvest-hope prepared for me.

Philip Henry Savage.

AUTUMN MAPLES

The thoughts of all the maples who shall name,
When the sad landscape turns to cold and gray?
Yet some for very ruth and sheer dismay,
Hearing the northwind pipe the winter's name,
Have fired the hills with beaconing clouds of flame;
And some with softer woe that day by day,
So sweet and brief, should go the westward way,
Have yearned upon the sunset with such shame
That all their cheeks have turned to tremulous rose;
Others for wrath have turned a rusty red,
And some that knew not either grief or dread,
Ere the old year should find its iron close,
Have gathered down the sun's last smiles acold,
Deep, deep, into their luminous hearts of gold.

Archibald Lampman.

I SAW IN LOUISIANA A LIVE-OAK GROWING

I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing,
All alone stood it and the moss hung down from the branches,
Without any companion it grew there uttering joyous leaves of dark green,
And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself,
But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing alone there without its friend near, for I knew I could not,
And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves upon it, and twined around it a little moss,
And brought it away, and I have placed it in sight in my room;
It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,
(For I believe lately I think of little else than of them,)
Yet it remains to me a curious token, it makes me think of manly love;
For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in Louisiana solitary in a wide flat space,
Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a friend a lover near,
I know very well I could not.

Walt Whitman.

THE MOUNTAIN OAK

The ideal of the mountain oak may be anything, twisting, and leaning, and shattered, and rock-encumbered, so only that, amidst all its misfortunes, it maintain the dignity of oak; and, indeed, I look upon this kind of a tree as more ideal than the other, in so far as, by its efforts and struggles, more of its nature, enduring power, patience in waiting for and ingenuity in obtaining what it wants, is brought out, and so more of the essence of oak exhibited than under more fortunate conditions.

Ruskin.

THE OLIVE TREE

I do not want painters to tell me any scientific facts about olive trees. But it had been well for them to have felt and seen the olive tree; to have loved it for Christ's sake, partly also for the helmed Wisdom's sake which was to the heathen in some sort as that nobler Wisdom which stood at God's right hand, when he founded the earth and established the heavens. To have loved

it even to the hoary dimness of its delicate foliage, subdued and faint of hue, as if the ashes of the Gethsemane agony had been cast upon it forever, and to have traced, line for line, the gnarled writhings of its intricate branches, and the pointed fretwork of its light and narrow leaves, inlaid on the blue field of the sky, and the small rosy-white stars of its spring blossoming, and the beads of sable fruit scattered by autumn along its topmost boughs—the right, in Israel, of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,—and, more than all, the softness of the mantle, silver gray, and tender like the down on a bird's breast, with which, far away, it veils the undulation of the mountains; these it had been well for them to have seen and drawn, whatever they had left unstudied in the gallery. *Ruskin.*

SPRUCE TREES

"In proportion to its weight when dry, Douglass spruce timber is perhaps stronger than that of any other large conifer in the country, and being tough, durable, and elastic, it is admirably suited for ship-building, piles, and heavy timber in general.

When lumbering is going on in the best Douglass woods, especially about Puget Sound, many of the long, slender boles are saved for spars; and so superior is their quality that they are called for in almost every shipyard in the world, and it is interesting to follow their fortunes. Felled and peeled and dragged to tide-water, they are raised again as yards and masts for ships, given iron roots and canvas foliage, decorated with flags, and sent to sea, where in glad motion they go cheerily over the ocean prairie in every latitude and longitude, singing and blowing responsive to the same winds that waved them when they were in the woods.

After standing in one place for centuries they thus go round the world like tourists, meeting many a friend from the old-home forest; some traveling like themselves, some standing head downward in muddy harbors, holding up the platforms of wharves, and others doing all kinds of hard timber work, showy or hidden."

John Muir.

THE PEAR TREE IN BLOSSOM

It glistens in bridal brightness,
  Bedecked with gems of the sun;
With golden promise of fruitage
  Blossom and bough are spun.

It pales in the air of the evening,
  Weighted with revery,
Veiling itself as a maiden
  With bridal modesty.

Then, deep in the darkness enfolded,
  It dreams of a distant frost,
The bridegroom beneath whose caresses
  Its beauty forever is lost.

Alice Wilson.

A LONDON PLANE-TREE

Green is the plane-tree in the square,
  The other trees are brown;
They droop and pine for country air;
  The plane-tree loves the town.

Here from my garret-pane, I mark
  The plane-tree bud and blow,
Shed her recuperative bark,
  And spread her shade below.

Among her branches, in and out,
  The city breezes play;
The dun fog wraps her round about;
  Above, the smoke curls grey.

Others the country take for choice,
  And hold the town in scorn;
But she has listened to the voice
  On city breezes borne.

Amy Levy.

POPLARS

They are not as the other trees;
  Apart, aloof, austere,
Mute of a thousand mysteries,
  They guard the crescent year;
Only a waft of fleeting breath
  Makes answer to the rain—
A few brief words the poplar saith,
  And then is still again.

When oak and elm on sultry eves
  Drowse in a full-fed sloth,
When hazels hardly lift their leaves
  Out of the undergrowth,
The poplars murmur each to each,
  Bending tall brow to brow;
In what remote, immortal speech
  Are they conversing now?

To the least movement of the air,
  Their supple shapes respond:
Although their visible forms be there,
  Their souls dwell far beyond:
Their thoughts, on upper currents borne,
  A pilgrimage do go,
Seeking the mountains of the morn,
  The springs of afterglow.

In some ethereal, thin Gulf-stream
  Of influence most sweet,
Some immemorial drift of dream
  That trends about their feet,
The poplars stand; and yet, who knows?
  If one should listen well,
Some careless whisper might disclose
  The secret poplar-spell.

May Byron.

BLACK POPLARS

I know five poplars on an inland hill
That murmur always with a mournful sound
Of distant waterfalls, while on the ground
No blade is stirring, and the air is still.
And I have often lain there wonder-bound
At the sad music of those trembling leaves,
For in that hour the quicken'd soul receives
High converse with the mystery profound
Of human sorrow and the tears of things.
So I return more kind, more gently wise,
More fillèd with that sympathy which brings
A look of love and hope to tearful eyes,
Lest it should seem the world's vast load of pain
Is measureless, and love and hope are vain.

"Centaur."

TO A PINE-TREE

If I could stand in such a plain,
With such bright sap in every vein;
Could throw upon so blue an air,
Branches so light and strong and fair;

If I could sink my roots so deep
In darkness where the spirits creep,
So broadly base, so firmly rear
My stem in such an atmosphere;

If I could balance and reveal
So utterly from head to heel
The music I was born to be,
In strophe and antistrophe;

Thou 'dst not more nobly stand and shine
Than I, proud Atlantean pine.

Philip Henry Savage.

THE FOREST PINE

A HUNDRED autumns fallen in fire
To dust and mould
Have faded from their perished gold
To throne thee higher,
O Titan pine, that soarest straight
From ground to sky without a mate,
Like one desire.

Dark is the hollow as a cup
Of shadow immense,
Of daylight-daunting dimness, whence
Thou springest up
Far into light, to take thy fill
Of splendour, solitary in still
Magnificence.

Leaves of the low brake hide a stir
Of small soft things:
Life, busy in flit of secret wings
And slinking fur,
Pricks buried seeds that upward thrust,
And green through germinating dust
Triumphant stings.

But thou, that seemest earth to scorn
And air to claim,
With all thy plumy spire aflame
And crest upborne
In the blue air, so far, so high,
As if the silence of the sky
About thee came,

Thou hidest all the sappy stream
That in thee swells;
Motionless fibre nothing tells:
And thou dost seem
To tower in glorious ignorance
Of earth's small stir and chafe, a trance,
A soaring dream!

And in a trance thou holdest me
With bated will;
And I am still, as thou are still,
My spirit free,
My body charm-dissolved to naught
But the vibration of a thought,
If thought could be.

O hush! within the blood is felt
An airy fear,
A faltering; and the heart can hear
The silence melt
To something frailer than a sound
Borne from the wide horizon's bound
To the inward ear.

Slowly, ah! slowly, a hush begins,
A trembling, where
Those branches sleep on golden air,
And gradual wins
A voice, a music, a long surge,
Sweet as a song, sad as a dirge,
Sighed out like prayer!

The singer knows not what he sings.
A lonely sound
Comes trembling through him from profound
Aerial springs.
The songs, the sighs, the world exiled,
Seek him, and in his heart-throbs wild
Still their wild wings.

Laurence Binyon.

MY PRETTY ROSE-TREE

A Flower was offer'd to me,
Such a flower as May never bore;
But I said, "I've a Pretty Rose-tree,"
And I passed the sweet flower o'er.

Then I went to my Pretty Rose-tree,
To tend her by day and by night,
But my Rose turn'd away with jealousy,
And her thorns were my only delight.

William Blake.

IN THE BOHEMIAN REDWOODS

Silent above, with seraph eyes
That peer amid the fronded spars,
More intimate, more friendly wise,
More tender glow the eternal stars.

Lyric beneath, with echoing blast
Of fellowship Arcadian,
More cosmic-strange, more pagan-vast,
More stellar glow the hearts of Man.

Oracular, aboriginal
Beyond our dreams, the psychic trees
Conspire their awful ritual
Of sempiternal silences;

Till solemn now, with lunar state,
The Druid drama slowly dawns,
Where cowlèd satyrs consecrate
A monastery—of the fauns.

Lit by dance and starry scroll,
Aloof, familiar, lone, divine
With Delphic laughter of the soul,
The temples of To-morrow shine!

Percy Mackaye.

THE THORN TREE

The night is sad with silver and the day is glad with gold,
And the woodland silence listens to a legend never old,
Of the Lady of the Fountain, whom the faery people know,
With her limbs of samite whiteness and her hair of golden glow,
Whom the boyish South Wind seeks for and the girlish-stepping
Rain;
Whom the sleepy leaves still whisper men shall never see again;
She whose Vivien charms were mistress of the magic Merlin knew,
That could change the dew to glow-worms and the glow-worms
into dew.
There's a thorn tree in the forest, and the faeries know the tree,
With its branches gnarled and wrinkled as a face with sorcery;
But the Maytime brings it clusters of a rainy fragrant white,
Like the bloom-bright brows of beauty or a hand of lifted light.
And all day the silence whispers to the sun-ray of the morn
How the bloom is lovely Vivien and how Merlin is the thorn:
How she won the doting wizard with her naked loveliness
Till he told her daemon secrets that must make his magic less.

How she charmed him and enchanted in the thorn-tree's thorns
to lie
Forever with his passion that should never dim or die:
And with wicked laughter looking on this thing which she had
done,
Like a visible aroma lingered sparkling in the sun:
How she stopped to kiss the pathos of an elf-lock of his beard,
In a mockery of parting and mock pity of his weird;
But her magic had forgotten that "who bends to give a kiss
Will but bring the curse upon them of the person whose it is;"
So the silence tells the secret.—And at night the faeries see
How the tossing bloom is Vivien, who is struggling to be free,
In the thorny arms of Merlin, who forever is the tree.

Madison Cawein.

YEW TREES

There is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore:
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's heaths; or those that crossed the sea
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poictiers.
Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary Tree! a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay;
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane;—a pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow;—there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

William Wordsworth.

THE OAK IS STRONG

The oak is strong that spreads its arms on Taurus' summit high,
And the great pine with oozing bark and cones against the sky;
But let some conquering whirlwind come, borne onward in its wrath,
It tears them up with all their roots, and sweeps them from its path;
Prone do they fall, and downward drag all growth both far and near:
So fall the mighty ones of earth, no more we see them here.

Catullus.

FROM BROWN BOUGHS BREAKING

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain.

. . . . . .

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remember'd is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

Swinburne.

THE AWAKENING OF THE TREES

First, when all the boughs, still heavy-laden, swished and rattled
In the smothered, sighing forest where the sleet and snowfall battled,
Where by day the crow croaked only,
And by night the moon blinked wanly,
Even there the rumor traveled and the deep-bound root-elves tattled.
"Change evolving!" so they said.
"Riddles solving! In the dead
And dungeoned deeps of earth we are questioning ourselves.
We are answering, 'Rebirth!'
We are forming, we are swarming, we are climbing!" said the elves.

And the larch unto the maple, and the chestnut to the beech
In their beck'ning, bowing language passed the secret each to each,
Passed the whispered, thrilling message
Till they thrilled again with presage
Of the wizard wonders pending and, in low, unending speech,
"Bonds are breaking!" said the trees.
"Something waking! Lo, a breeze
And a bird-chip of last year. . . . Is it *that* that shall befall,
Or mere memory we hear?
We are trembling, we are wondering and waiting!" said they all.

And old Winter, who had brooded on the autumn groves denuded,
And, with dotard kindness shining, laid his cloak for their attire,
Felt a sudden stir of fire
Run and ripple o'er the land,
(Warming life or kindling fire?)
Which he did not understand;
But it irked the age-chilled sire
In a way he could not stand.

So he rose from long reclining
And he gathered up his raiment—
All his drifted white attire—
And he stopped not for repayment,
But he fled on winds loud whining, winging Northward in his ire.

Could it be? The sun came singing down the hills with breezy weather;
All the scents of April bringing, all the birds of April winging,
All the showers of April flinging—shower and shine and song together!
Could it be? Could it be?
How they babbled, tree to tree,
How they loosed their pent garrulity and rustled, tree to tree—
In what lively conversation, in what wordy jubilation
Did they babble, did they chatter, did they gossip, tree to tree:
"We must dress us, we must dress us! We are most unkempt and frowsy,
For we cared not in the winter—in the winter dull and drowsy!
But the birds, our little gallants,
On our branches twit and balance.
We must blossom forth in daintiness, no longer drab and drowsy!"
And daintily, oh daintily, from morning-time to twilight,
They prinked them in the sunlight, they blossomed in that shy light
With blossoms white and virginal, with blossoms pink and saucy,
With leafy fillets garlanded and streamers green and mossy.
With violets for their slipper-bows and sunlight for adorning
They blossomed forth, each one of them, to greet the April morning!
And the little sap-elves chuckled,
'Mid the bloom swayed to and fro,
"'Tis a most ecstatic morning, but we knew it long ago—
We knew it all—we knew it all a-many months ago!"

William Rose Benét.

APRIL WEATHER

SOON, ah, soon the April weather
With the sunshine at the door,
And the mellow melting rain-wind
Sweeping from the South once more.

Soon the rosy maples budding,
And the willows putting forth,
Misty crimson and soft yellow
In the valleys of the North.

Soon the hazy purple distance,
Where the cabined heart takes wing,
Eager for the old migration
In the magic of the spring.

Soon, ah, soon the budding windflowers
Through the forest white and frail,
And the odorous wild cherry
Gleaming in her ghostly veil.

Soon, about the waking uplands
The hepaticas in blue,—
Children of the first warm sunlight
In their sober Quaker hue,—

All our shining little sisters
Of the forest and the field,
Lifting up their quiet faces
With the secret half revealed.

Soon across the folding twilight
Of the round earth hushed to hear,
The first robin at his vespers
Calling far, serene and clear.

Soon the waking and the summons,
  Starting sap in bole and blade,
And the bubbling marshy whisper
  Seeping up through bog and glade.

Soon the frogs in silver chorus
  Through the night, from marsh and swale,
Blowing in their tiny oboes
  All the joy that shall not fail,—

Passing up the old earth rapture
  By a thousand streams and rills,
From the red Virginian valleys
  To the blue Canadian hills.

Soon, ah, soon the splendid impulse,
  Nomad longing, vagrant whim,
When a man's false angels vanish
  And the truth comes back to him.

Soon the majesty, the vision,
  And the old unfaltering dream,
Faith to follow, strength to stablish,
  Will to venture and to seem;

All the radiance, the glamour,
  The expectancy and poise,
Of this ancient life renewing
  Its temerities and joys.

Soon the immemorial magic
  Of the young Aprilian moon,
And the wonder of thy friendship
  In the twilight—soon, ah, soon!

Bliss Carman.

THE COMING OF SUMMER

The first hint of summer comes when the trees are fully fledged and the nymph Shadow is born. See her cool circles again beneath the trees in the field, or her deeper and cooler retreats in the woods. On the slopes, on the opposite side of the river, there have been for months under the morning and noon sun only slight shadow tracings, a fretwork of shadow lines; but some morning in May I look across and see solid masses of shade falling from the trees athwart the sloping turf. How the eye revels in them! The trees are again clothed and in their right minds; myriad leaves rustle in promise of the coming festival. Now the trees are sentient beings; they have thoughts and fancies; they stir with emotion; they converse together; they whisper or dream in the twilight; they struggle and wrestle with the storm.

John Burroughs.

A YOUNG FIR-WOOD

These little firs to-day are things
  To clasp into a giant's cap,
  Or fans to suit his lady's lap.
From many winters, many springs
  Shall cherish them in strength and sap.
  Till they be marked upon the map,
A wood for the wind's wanderings.

All seed is in the sower's hands:
  And what at first was trained to spread
  Its shelter for some single head,—
Yea, even such fellowship of wands,—
  May hide the sunset, and the shade
  Of its great multitude be laid
Upon the earth and elder sands.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

THE WHITE TREE

Yonder by the fallen sill
Where all day are beat of sun,
Plaint of wind and call of bird,
But no spoken word—
Yonder on the woody hill
Where the steep roads run,

Faithful to the very hour
Springs a sudden lovely white
Like a low cloud
On the wood—
A living apple-tree in flower,
Ethereally bright.

Scent of gardens—mint and musk,
Cattle crowding to the bars,
Human stirring, slow and mild,
The calling of a child,
An early candle in the dusk
Winking at the stars—

Vanished all—forgotten quite—
Gone as if they never were,
From the hill's broad wilderness—
The past labours and their peace
Tarry in no more than this—
A sudden fleet, and lonely white,
Blown against the fir.

Mildred McNeal Sweeney.

CHILDREN

What a garden of surprise
Out beyond my window lies!
Fancy, when the night is there
Gentle trees with drooping hair
Rocking, rocking cradle-wise
Little stars with yellow eyes!

George Cronyn.

PAN PIPES

In the green spaces of the listening trees
Pan sits at ease,
Watching with lazy eyes
Little blue butterflies
That flicker sidelong in the fitful breeze;
While on his pipe he plays
Quaint trills and roundelays
With dropping cadences;
And shy red squirrels rub against his knees.

And, through the city's tumult and the beat
Of hurrying feet,
Those whom the god loves hear
Pan's pipe, insistent, clear;
Echoes of elfin laughter, high and sweet,
Catch in the sparrow's cries,
Those tinkling melodies
That sing where brooklets meet,
And the wood's glamor colors the gray street.

Punch.

AGAMEDE'S SONG

Grow, grow, thou little tree,
His body at the roots of thee;
Since last year's loveliness in death
The living beauty nourisheth.

Bloom, bloom, thou little tree,
Thy roots around the heart of me;
Thou canst not blow too white and fair
From all the sweetness hidden there.

Die, die, thou little tree,
And be as all sweet things must be;
Deep where thy petals drift I, too,
Would rest the changing seasons through.

Arthur Upson.

TALKING BRANCHES AND WHISPERING LEAVES

To-day 'tis Spring; the hawthorne tree
Is green with buds; to-day maybe
She whom I think of thinks of me,
    And finds the thought enough;
And when those buds are grown to leaves,
The thought wherein she scarce believes
    Will grow perhaps to love.

Arthur W. E. O'Shaughnessy.

Seem'd as th' unbending oak, the laurel chaste,
And ev'ry tree amid that flow'ry waste,
Seem'd as the earth, the waves, imbibed the charm,
    And lifeless Nature's self with love grew warm.

Torquato Tasso.

IN THE HEART OF THE WOODS

I

The Heart of the woods, I hear it, beating, beating afar,
In the glamour and gloom of the night, in the light of the rosy star,
In the cold sweet voice of the bird, in the throb of the flower-soft sea! . . .
For the Heart of the woods is the Heart of the world and the Heart of Eternity,
Ay, and the burning passionate Heart of the heart in you and me.

Love of my heart, love of the world, linking the golden moon
With the flowery moths that flutter thro' the scented leaves of June,
And the mind of man with beauty, and youth with the dreaming night
Of stars and flowers and waters and breasts of glimmering white,
And streaming hair of fragrant dusk and flying limbs of lovely light;

Life of me, life of me, shining in sun and cloud and wind,
In the dark eyes of the fawn and the eyes of the hound behind,
In the leaves that lie in the seed unsown, and the dream of the babe unborn,
O, flaming tides of my blood, as you flow thro' flower and root and thorn,
I feel you burning the boughs of night to kindle the fires of morn.

Soul of me, soul of me, yearning wherever a lavrock sings,
Or the crimson gloom is winnowed by the whirr of wood-doves' wings,
Or the spray of the foam-bow rustles in the white dawn of the moon,
And mournful billows moan aloud, *Come soon, soon, soon,*
Come soon, O Death with the Heart of love and the secret of the rune.

Heart of me, heart of me, heart of me, beating, beating afar,
In the green gloom of the night, in the light of the rosy star,
In the cold sweet voice of the bird, in the throb of the flower-soft sea! . . .
O, the Heart of the woods is the Heart of the world and the Heart of Eternity,
Ay, and the burning passionate Heart of the heart in you and me.

II

O, Death will never find us in the heart of the wood,
The song is in my blood, night and day:
We will pluck a scented petal from the Rose upon the Rood
Where Love lies bleeding on the way.
We will listen to the linnet and watch the waters leap,
When the clouds go dreaming by,
And under the wild roses and the stars we will sleep,
And wander on together, you and I.

We shall understand the mystery that none has understood,
We shall know why the leafy gloom is green.
O, Death will never find us in the heart of the wood
When we see what the stars have seen!
We have heard the hidden song of the soft dews falling
At the end of the last dark sky,
Where all the sorrows of the world are calling,
We must wander on together, you and I.

They are calling, calling, *Away, come away!*
And we know not whence they call;
For the song is in our hearts, we hear it night and day,
As the deep tides rise and fall:
O, Death will never find us in the heart of the wood,
While the hours and the years roll by!
We have heard it, we have heard it, but we have not understood,
We must wander on together, you and I.

The wind may beat upon us, the rain may blind our eyes,
  The leaves may fall beneath the winter's wing;
But we shall hear the music of the dream that never dies,
  And we shall know the secret of the Spring.
We shall know how all the blossoms of evil and of good
  Are mingled in the meadows of the sky;
And then—if Death can find us in the heart of the wood—
  We shall wander on together, you and I.

Alfred Noyes.

ROSALIND

O Rosalind! these trees shall be my books,
And in their barks my tho'ts I'll character
That every eye, which in this forest looks,
Shall see thy virtue witness'd everywhere—
Run, run, Orlando; carve on every tree
The fair, the chaste, and unexpressive she.

Shakespeare.

IN THE APPLE BOUGHS THE COOLNESS

[Sappho]

In the apple bough the coolness
  Murmurs, and the grey leaves flicker
Where sleep wanders.

In this garden all the hot noon
  I await thy fluttering footfall
Through the twilight.

Bliss Carman.

APPLE BLOSSOMS

The soft wind whispered secrets to the apple-tree,
  Caressed her in his arms, and would not let her go
  Until the rosy blossoms came triumphantly
To tell the one sweet message that he wished to know.

A timid maiden with her lover lingered there
  In silence, clasping hands amid the leaves that fell,
  Till one bold blossom drifting down the perfumed air
Just touched her rounded cheek, and bade the blushes tell.

Frank Dempster Sherman.

THE SCARLET TANAGER AND THE LEAF

(From Kuloskap the Master)

In the earliest time on the greatest mountain
Lived merry Mĭpis, the Little Leaf;
When spring is coming and sunlight is shining
He climbs a tree, and there, all summer,
Dressed in green he rocks in the branches,
Listens all day to the birds and the breezes,
And goes to sleep to the song of the owl.

When fall is coming and days are shorter,
Mĭpis dresses himself in scarlet;
Glad and gay in the Indian summer;
But as the nights grow cold and longer,
He puts on a coat of brown or yellow,
Curls himself up like a bear for winter,
Lets go his hold and falls to the ground;
There he sleeps, all under the snowdrift
Till he hears in the spring the bluebird calling,
And the stream fighting its enemy ice—
Carrying proudly in pieces as prisoners
The foe which kept it a frozen captive,
All the winter under its wigwam.
Then little Mĭpis, the Leaf, awaking,
Dresses in green and climbs in the sunshine,
Up through a tree, and upon the branches,
Lives as he did the summer before.

Merry Mĭpis on a bright May morning
Was stretching himself in the warm sunshine
When he heard afar a wonderful music,
A sound like a flute and the voice of a maiden,
Rippling melodies melting in one.
Never before had he heard such singing;
Then looking up he beheld before him
A beautiful merry little bird-girl,
Dressed in garments of brilliant scarlet,
Just like his own in the Indian summer.

"O fairest of small birds," said merry Mĭpis;
"Who are you, and what is your name?"
Thus she answered: "I am Squ'tes:
The Little Fire. When I fly in the forest
And meet in my way a bar of sunshine,
I look as I enter and leave the shadow
Like a red flame which leaps up in darkness,
And then falls asleep in the night again.
I have lived in the deep green forest,
Even as you have for many ages,
Singing my songs to K'mûsoms'n
Unto our Father the mighty mountain,
And because he well loved my music,
For a reward he sent me hither
To seek a youth whose name is Mĭpis,
Whom he wills that I should wed.
You are truly the one whom I seek."

Little Leaf listened in silence,
Being by nature very cunning,
Trained to suspicion from his childhood;
Thus his grandmother ever taught him:
"My child—beware of all living creatures,
Even the very smallest insect
May eat your life out. A worm so little
That it can pass through the prick of a needle
Even as a rabbit runs through a valley,
Or as a fish swims free up a river,
May cut your stem or blight your beauty;
Anything living may be your death."

So to Squ'tes, Mĭpis listened,
Charmed with her beauty yet still mistrusting,
Liking her look yet deeply doubting,
Wondering whether this lovely creature
Was truly a friend or a false-hearted foe.
Beautiful Squ'tes, never heeding
What the Leaf thought, began to warble;
Pouring out in the pleasant sunshine
Her morning song. As Mĭpis listened
To the melodious trill, he melted;

For the sweet tune filled all the forest,
Every leaf on the tree was listening,
Branches were waving in keeping cadence,
Even the busy ants stopped running,
The butterfly sat on a flower to hear;
And as the music grew tender and stronger,
And as in one long soft note it ended,
Little Leaf said to her: "Be my own!"

Charles Leland and John Prince.

A LEAF ON THE WIND

Borne from the heavens, a leaf on the wind,
Blown o'er the treetops, and blown to the ground,
Swept to your heart and about it entwined,
Quivered and trembling with infinite sound.
Wind-free and flame-bright and breathless,—a fire
Blown up and down the great vast of the world,
Tortured and twisting with burning desire,
Like a star from the heavens, fate-driven, earth-hurled,
Take me and shape me, a breath of the light,
Make me a reed for the winds, life-sweet,
Impelled from the heights and the depths in flight,
Blown on the whirlwind, blown to your feet.

Dorothea Lawrence Mann.

ONE YEAR AGO

Last year under the chestnut-trees,
Under the chestnuts white,
Two of us walked, two of us talked;
Would it were so to-night!

Two were the voices, tremulous, sweet;
Two were the heads bent low;
Two were the hands together clasped,
One white as the flower-snow.

One year! but a year! When all is told
Twelve months and a day! No more;
Yet my footsteps flag, and my youth seems old,
And my seared life feels fourscore.

Two were the hearts that together beat,—
  Two were the hearts, yet one;
Two were the figures that, interlaced,
  Strolled 'neath those trees in the sun.

Those trees, those leaf-laden, bloom-strewing trees!
  That glorious sun of June!
Now they strike the golden chords of my soul,
  Sound sweet on it Love's own tune.

Ah, leaves, ye fall, and grow green again,
  Nor mourn for the springtime fled;
Ah, trees, ye bloom in another June,
  But the life of my life is dead!

Caroline D. Howe.

TO JANE: THE RECOLLECTION

We wander to the Pine Forest
  That skirts the Ocean's foam,
The lightest wind was in its nest,
  The tempest in its home.
The whispering waves were half asleep,
  The clouds were gone to play,
And on the bosom of the deep,
  The smile of Heaven lay;
It seemed as if the hour were one
  Sent from beyond the skies,
Which scattered from above the sun
  A light of Paradise.

We paused amid the pines that stood
  The giants of the waste,
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
  As serpents interlaced,
And soothed by every azure breath,
  That under heaven is blown,
To harmonies and hues beneath,
  As tender as its own;
Now all the tree-tops lay asleep,
  Like green waves on the sea,
As still as in the silent deep
  The ocean woods may be.

How calm it was!—the silence there
By such a chain was bound
That even the busy woodpecker
Made stiller by her sound
The inviolable quietness;
The breath of peace we drew
With its soft motion made not less
The calm that round us grew.
There seemed from the remotest seat
Of the white mountain waste,
To the soft flower beneath our feet,
A magic circle traced,—
A spirit interfused around,
A thrilling silent life,
To momentary peace it bound
Our mortal nature's strife;—
And still I felt the centre of
The magic circle there,
Was one fair form that filled with love
The lifeless atmosphere.

We paused beside the pools that lie
Under the forest bough,
Each seemed as 't were a little sky
Gulft in a world below;
A firmament of purple light,
Which in the dark earth lay,
More boundless than the depth of night,
And purer than the day—
In which the lovely forests grew
As in the upper air,
More perfect both in shape and hue
Than any spreading there,
There lay the glade and neighboring lawn,
And thro' the dark green wood
The white sun twinkling like the dawn
Out of a speckled cloud.
Sweet views which in our world above
Can never well be seen,
Were imaged by the water's love
Of that fair forest green.

And all was interfused beneath
With an elysian glow,
An atmosphere without a breath,
A softer day below.
Like one beloved the scene had lent
To the dark water's breast,
Its every leaf and lineament
With more than truth exprest;
Until an envious wind crept by,
Like an unwelcome thought,
Which from the mind's too faithful eye
Blots one dear image out.
Tho' thou art ever fair and kind,
The forests ever green,
Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind,
Than calm in waters seen.

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

TO SYCAMORES

I'm sick of love; O let me lie
Under your shades to sleep or die!
Either is welcome; so I have
Or here my bed, or here my grave.
Why do you sigh, and sob, and keep
Time with the tears that I do weep?
Say, have ye sense, or, do you prove
What crucifixions are in love?
I know ye do; and that's the why
You sigh for love as well as I.

Robert Herrick.

THE GRAVE OF LOVE

I dug, beneath the cypress shade,
What well might seem an elfin's grave;
And every pledge in earth I laid,
That erst thy false affection gave.

I pressed them down the sod beneath;
I placed one mossy stone above;
And twined the rose's fading wreath
Around the sepulchre of love.

Frail as thy love, the flowers were dead,
Ere yet the evening sun was set:
But years will see the cypress spread,
Immutable as my regret.

Thomas Love Peacock.

THE DREAM DOCUMENTS

The dream has come to an end, and I have just received a letter asking for a return of the dream documents. In other words, Miranda has written asking me to send back her letters.

Remember that these letters are to me more precious, more important than the secret messages of kings. They must be delivered with appropriate ceremony.

The way I should like best, and I think it might appeal to Miranda too, would be for me to deliver them myself at the address of a certain oak tree in a certain unforgotten woodland, "East of the Sun and West of the Moon." I have already found for them a beautiful coffin, a little carved chest in which a long-dead queen of Arabia kept the sweet-smelling essences and unguents of her beauty. The box is fragrant yet with memories of her rose-petal face. In this box I will place Miranda's letters, and there will still be room enough left for mine.

Then if Miranda will consent, I will meet her in that woodland at the rising of the moon, and, if she will bring with her my letters we will place them in the same box with hers, and then I will dig a grave beneath the oak tree, and in it we will place the box together and cover it over with the fragrant summer

mould, and leaves, and blossoms, and tears; and we will go our way, she through one green gate of the wood and I through another.

And great Nature, who gave us our dream, will thus take it back into her bosom; and Miranda's lovely thoughts will blossom again in anemone and violet, and out of that grave of beautiful words, as spring follows spring, two young oak trees will grow, inextricably entwined in root and branch, and there the birds will sing more sweetly than in any other part of the wood, and there the silence will be like the silence of a temple, and to those who sit and listen there will come soothing messages of the spirit out of the stillness.

Richard Le Gallienne.

THE BEECH-TREE

"My beautiful beech, your smooth grey coat is trimmed
With letters. Once, each stood for all things dear
To foolish lovers, dead this many a year,
Whose lamp of lighted love so soon was dimmed
You have seen them come and go
And heard their kisses and vows
Under your boughs,
The pitiful vows they swore,
Have seen their poor tears flow,
Have seen them part; to meet, and to return, no more!

And in old winters, through your branches bare,
The north wind drove the blue home-scented smoke
That on the glowing Christmas hearth awoke
Where the old logs, with eager flicker and flare,
Sang their low crackling song
Of peace and of good will.
The old song is still.
The old voices have died away,
The hearth has been cold so long,
And the bright faces dimmed and covered up with clay.

And summer after summer wakes to glow
The ordered pleasure with the clipped box-hedge,
The drooping lilac by the old moat's edge,

The roses, that throw you kisses from below,
The orchard pink and white,
The sedge's whispered words,
The nesting birds,
All these return to revel round your feet.
And in the untroubled night
The nightingale still sings, the jasmine still is sweet.

My beautiful beech, I carve upon you here
The master-letter which begins her name
Through whom, to me, the royal summer came,
And nightingale and rose, and all things dear,
And, in some far-off time,
I shall come here, weary and old,
When the hearth in my heart is cold
And the birds that nest there flown;
I will remember this summer in all its prime
And say, "There was a day—
Thank God, the Giver, an unforgotten day,
When I walked here, not alone,
—O God of pity and sorrow, not alone!"

Ethel Nesbit Bland.

WIND AND TREE

"A woman is a branchy tree
And man a singing wind,
And from her branches carelessly
He takes what he can find:
Then man and wind go far away
While winter comes with loneliness,
With cold and rain and slow decay
On woman and on tree till they
Droop down unto the ground and be
A withered woman, a withered tree;
While wind and man woo undismayed
Another tree, another maid."

James Stephens.

THE SPICE-TREE

This is the song
The spice-tree sings:
"Hunger and fire,
Hunger and fire,
Sky-born Beauty—
Spice of desire,"
Under the spice-tree
Watch and wait,
Burning maidens
And lads that mate.

The spice-tree spreads
And its boughs come down
Shadowing village and farm and town.
And none can see
But the pure of heart
The great green leaves
And the boughs descending,
And hear the song that is never ending.

The deep roots whisper,
The branches say:—
"Love to-morrow,
And love to-day,
And till Heaven's day,
And till Heaven's day."

The moon is a bird's nest in its branches,
The moon is hung in its topmost spaces.
And there to-night, two doves play house
While lovers watch with uplifted faces.
Two doves go home
To their nest, the moon.
It is woven of twigs of broken light,
With threads of scarlet and threads of gray
And a lining of down for silk delight.
To their Eden, the moon, fly home our doves,
Up through the boughs of the great spice-tree;—
And one is the kiss I took from you,
And one is the kiss you gave to me.

Vachel Lindsay.

A PINE-TREE STOOD ALONE

A Pine-tree stood alone on
A bare bleak northern height;
The ice and snow they swathe it,
As it sleeps there, all in white.

'Tis dreaming of a palm-tree,
In a far-off Eastern land,
That mourns, alone and silent,
On a ledge of burning sand.

Heinrich Heine.

THERE IS A MEDLAR-TREE

[Sappho]

There is a Medlar-tree
Growing in front of my lover's house,
And there all day
The wind makes a pleasant sound.

And when the evening comes,
We sit there together in the dusk,
And watch the stars
Appear in the quiet blue.

Bliss Carman.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

The repose of the sun-embroidered green gloom slowly spread over my heart. I forgot for what I had travelled, and I surrendered my mind without struggle to the maze of shadows and songs.

Rabindranath Tagore.

A WOOD

Come into the close shadow of the wood.
Here is cool quiet born of solitude,
Cool leafy caverns, murmurous as the seas,
When a breath blows across them. Here are these
Lone alleys to the flitting footfalls known
Of nymphs that haunt the silences alone;
Divinest leisure, large as heaven or morn;
Deep thoughtfulness, of all the ages born
Whose shadows slumber in the central shade;
Quiet delight; a pensive pleasure made
By that sweet sense of slumber that still leaves
A far-off air about the vacant leaves,
An air as of some palace walls that seem
To rise and sway in a remembered dream.

Arthur Symons.

THE PEACE OF THE FOREST

He smelt the earth and trees and flowers, the perfume of mown grass, and the bits of open heath-land far away in the heart of the woods. The summer wind stirred very faintly through the leaves. But the great New Forest hardly raised her sweeping skirts of black and purple shadow.

Mr. Bittacy, however, knew intimately every detail of that wilderness of trees within. He knew all the purple coombs splashed with yellow waves of gorse; sweet with juniper and myrtle, and gleaming with clear and dark-eyed pools that watched the sky. There hawks hovered, circling hour by hour, and the flicker of the peewit's flight with its melancholy, petulant cry, deepened the sense of stillness.

He knew the solitary pines, dwarfed, tufted, vigorous, that sang to every lost wind, travellers like the gipsies who pitched their bush-like tents beneath them; he knew the shaggy ponies, with foals like baby centaurs; the chattering jays, the milky call of cuckoos in the spring, and the boom of the bittern from the lonely marshes. The undergrowth of watching hollies, he knew too, strange and mysterious, with their dark, suggestive beauty, and the yellow shimmer of their pale dropped leaves.

Here all the forest lived and breathed in safety, secure from mutilation. No terror of the axe could haunt the peace of its vast subconscious life, no terror of devasting Man afflict it with the dread of premature death. It knew itself supreme; it spread and preened itself without concealment. It set no spires to carry warnings, for no wind brought messages of alarm as it bulged outwards to the sun and stars.

But, once its leafy portals left behind, the trees of the countryside were otherwise. The houses threatened them; they knew themselves in danger. The roads were no longer glades of silent turf, but noisy, cruel ways by which men came to attack them. They were civilised, cared for—but cared for in order that some day they might be put to death. Even in the villages, where the solemn and immemorial repose of giant chestnuts aped security, the tossing of a silver birch against their mass, impatient in the littlest wind, brought warning. Dust clogged their leaves. The inner humming of their quiet life became inaudible beneath the scream and shriek of clattering traffic. They longed and prayed to enter the great Peace of the Forest yonder, but they could not move. They knew, moreover, that the Forest with its august, deep splendour despised and pitied them. They were a thing of artificial gardens, and belonged to beds of flowers all forced to grow one way.

Algernon Blackwood.

THE HOUSE OF THE TREES

Ope your doors and take me in,
  Spirit of the wood,
Wash me clean of dust and din,
  Clothe me in your mood.

Take me from the noisy light
  To the sunless peace,
Where at mid-day standeth Night
  Singing Toil's release.

All your dusky twilight stores
  To my senses give;
Take me in and lock the doors,
  Show me how to live.

Lift your leafy roof for me,
  Part your yielding walls:
Let me wander lingeringly
  Through your scented halls.

Ope your doors and take me in,
  Spirit of the wood;
Take me—make me next of kin
  To your leafy brood.

Ethelwyn Wetherald.

IN THE WOOD

No shrill praise nor thanks confessed
  Clamorous to be understood,
Troubles here the Sabbath rest
  Of the solitary wood.
(There are ways to live and be
Praiseful, thankful, silently.)

Flowers fear not their God will blight
  If they shout no praises loud;
Trees attain their normal height
  Waving worship to a cloud.
(Why should mortals anxiously
Reassure the Deity?)

Thanks there are in everything
  Growing down the woodland way,
Rendered through developing
  Fullest life and freest sway.
(Let me find how I may be
Thankful unobtrusively.)

Arthur Upson.

THE HILLTOP WOOD

Up in the hilltop wood
I heard the oak-trees sing
As only the great oaks can
When the leaves are down, and they fling
Their arms to the utmost span
And exult in their brotherhood
Up on the top of the hill.

Oh, but the air was good!
And to feel them glorying
As only the great oaks can
In their stubbornness, and the spring
That is in it, as in a man!
To exult in their brotherhood
Up on the top of the hill!

I never thought that I could
Know in my flesh the thing
That only the great oaks can
When their leaves are down, and they fling
Their arms out wide:—but a man
Is at home in that great oak-wood
Up on the top of the hill.

I climbed up among them: I stood
In the ranks of the trees that sing
As only the great oaks can
All of the Wonderful Thing:
There, to my uttermost span,
I exulted in this that I could
Up on the top of the hill.

This that I one time would—
If, some time, the hour should bring
Me mastery!—now I can.
I hold it from taking wing:
I hold it, more wonderful than
Any wonder:—the Making-good
Of my Dream on the top of the hill.

I tumble out all the brood
Of doubt from my boughs that I swing
As only a great oak can!
I exult with my branches! I fling
My arms to their utmost span!
I have come to my brotherhood
Up on the top of this hill.

You great hearts—you that have stood
On this hilltop uttering
(As only the great oaks can)
Your wonder—to-day I bring
Another fragment of Man
To be of your brotherhood
Up on the top of the hill.

Henry Bryan Binns.

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

The noonday sun
Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass
Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence
A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,
Scooped in the dark base of their aëry rocks
Mocking its moans, respond and roar forever.
The meeting boughs and implicated leaves
Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as, led
By love, or dream, or God, or mightier Death,
He sought in Nature's dearest haunt, some bank,
Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark
And dark the shades accumulate. The oak,
Expanding its immense and knotty arms,
Embraces the light beech. The pyramids
Of the tall cedar overarching frame
Most solemn domes within, and far below,
Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,
The ash and the acacia floating hang
Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed
In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,
Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around
The gray trunks, and, as gamesome infants' eyes,
With gentle meanings, and most innocent wiles,
Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,
These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs,
Uniting their close union; the woven leaves
Make net-work of the dark blue light of day,
And the night's noontide clearness, mutable
As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns
Beneath these canopies extend their swells,
Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms
Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen
Sends from its woods of musk-rose, twined with jasmine,
A soul-dissolving odor, to invite
To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell,
Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep

Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,
Like vaporous shapes half seen; beyond, a well,
Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave
Images all the woven boughs above,
And each depending leaf, and every speck
Of azure sky, darting between their chasms;
Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves
Its portraiture, but some inconstant star
Between one foliaged lattice twinkling fair,
Or painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon,
Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,
Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings
Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

OF SOLITUDE

Hail, old patrician trees, so great and good!
Hail, ye plebeian underwood!
Where the poetic birds rejoice,
And for their quiet nests and plenteous food
Pay with their grateful voice.

Hail, the poor Muse's richest manor-seat!
Ye country-houses and retreat,
Which all the happy gods so love,
That for you oft they quit their bright and great
Metropolis above.

Here Nature does a house for me erect,
Nature! the wisest architect,
Who those fond artists does depise
That can the fair and living trees neglect,
Yet the dead timber prize.

Here let me, careless and unthoughtful lying,
Hear the soft winds above me flying,
With all their wanton boughs dispute,
And the more tuneful birds to both replying,
Nor be myself, too, mute.

A silver stream shall roll his waters near,
Gilt with the sunbeams here and there.
On whose enamell'd bank I'll walk,
And see how prettily they smile,
And hear how prettily they talk.

Ah! wretched, and too solitary he
Who loves not his own company!
He'll feel the weight of't many a day,
Unless he call in sin or vanity
To help to bear 't away.

Abraham Cowley.

TRANQUILLITY OF THE WOODS

Who but the solitary, artists alone excepted, understand the meaning of elms in an English landscape? To us there is an especial appeal in their loneliness, as they range apart along the hedge-rows, embayed in blue air and sunlight which do but play upon the fringe of your huddling forest. See them on a breezy August morning across a tawny cornfield, printing their dark feathery contour on a blue sky and holding the shadows to their bosoms; or on a June evening stand between them and the setting sun, and mark the droop and poise of the upper foliage fretted black upon a ground of red fire. Here are no cones or hemispheres, or shapeless bulks of green, but living beings of articulated form, clothed in verdure as with the fine-wrought drapery that enhances rather than conceals the beauty of the statue.

Or at a still later hour, over against the harvest moon, see them rise so congruous with the gentle night, casting round them not palls of ominous gloom, but clear translucent shadows sifted through traceries of leafage which do but veil the light. And what variety of form and structure sunders them from other trees, what irregular grace of asymmetry. Some are tall and straight, springing like fountains arrested in the moment when they turn to fall; others bend oblique without one perpendicular line, every branch by some subtle instinct evading the hard angles of earth-measurement as unmeet for that which frames the sky; others again spread to all the quarters of heaven their vast umbrageous arms. No trees are so companionable as the elms to the red-roofed homestead which nestles at their feet and is glad

for them. Seen from a distance, how delightful is this association, how delicate the contrast of tile and leaf and timbered barn, each lending some complement to the other's sweet imperfection. Perhaps there will be a whole line of distinct trees, and then you will see as it were a cliff-side of verdure in which beneath the billowy curves of lit foliage, open out caverns and cool deeps of shadow fit for a Dryad's repose.

To know the elm-tree you must not come too near, for it too is shy and does not reveal its nature lightly; you may be cooler in the shadow of the beech or stand drier beneath the red-stemmed leaves of the sycamore. Yet it suffers the clinging ivy; it was beloved of poets in old days, and painters love it still. It has not the walnut's vivid green nor the rare flush that lights up the pine-stem. Its leaves are rough and of no brilliance; its bark is rugged also. But in life, the familiar guardian of home meadows, it has stood by our fathers' landmarks from generation to generation, and when fallen and hewn and stacked it sheds a fragrance which, wherever perceived in after years, brings back memories of wanderings in deep lanes and of the great dim barns where we played in childhood. In the dull winter days when only yews and cypresses wear their leaves, I sometimes wander to a place whose walls are hung with the works of a greater elm-lover than I; there seated before a few small frames I bless De Wint for having read the dear trees truly, and glorified a close and barren gallery with all the breeze and colours of the fields; I am beyond all noise and murkiness, walking in the peace and spaciousness of unsullied air.

To a mind now happily reverted to the primitive confidence in souls everywhere indwelling and creating sympathies between all things, the bond of kinship between man and nature were drawn ever closer, and it seemed a wholly natural belief that the changes of the visible universe, affecting things which lived an almost personal existence, should be instinct with the deeper meaning of events in the drama of human existence.

W. Compton Leith.

IN THE PINE GROVES

Here is a quiet place where one may dream
The hours away and be content. It shines
With many a shadow spot and golden gleam
Under the murmur of these priestly pines.
About the level russet-matted floor,
Each like a star in his appointed station,
The sole-flowered scented pyrolas by the score
Stand with heads drooped in fragrant meditation.
The pensive thrush, the hermit of the wood,
Dreams far within, and piping at his leisure,
Tells to the hills the forest's inmost mood
Of memory and its solitary pleasure.
Earth only and sun are here, and shadow and trees
And thoughts that are eternal even as these.

Almost till noon I kept the weary road,
Amid the dust and din of passing teams,
With a soul shaped to its accustomed load
Of silly cares and microscopic dreams:
But here a nobler influence is unfurled;
It is no more the present petty hour,
But Time, and all the pine-groves of the world
Enfold my spirit in their pensive power.
Behold this little speedwell: Time shall flow,
Customs and commonwealths and faiths shall pass,
And be as they had never been; not so
The little pale blue speedwell in the grass,
Whatever change shall fall of good or ill,
Grave eyes shall mark the little speedwell still.

Archibald Lampman.

IN A WYOMING FOREST

Now it is twilight, and a yellow fire
Streaks through the narrow aisles of singing pines.
Low the old sexton, Night, lets down his blinds,
Leaving me in his sanctuary choir
To hear my own heart inwardly aspire,
Chanting with all the trees the same sweet lines;
While, overhead, one bent cloud dimly shines
Like an archangel pleading my desire.
Sunset across the level woodland floor,
And calm within the forest of my soul;
A softer light I had not known before
Now radiates from my beclouded goal,
And in a tranquil glory through the door
Of the dun future seems to rise and roll.

Arthur Upson.

I love the forest; I could dwell among
That silent people, till my thoughts up grew
In nobly ordered form, as to my view
Rose the succession of that lofty throng;—
The mellow footstep on a ground of leaves
Form'd by the slow decay of num'rous years,—
The couch of moss, whose growth alone appears,
Beneath the fir's inhospitable eaves,—
The chirp and flutter of some single bird,
The rustle in the brake,—what precious store
Of joys have these on poets' hearts conferr'd?
And then at times to send one's own voice out,
In the full frolic of one startling shout,
Only to feel the after stillness more!

R. M. Milnes, Lord Houghton.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LEAVES

A hanging dome of leaves, a canopy moon-proof.

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

LEAVES

It is pleasant to walk over the beds of these fresh, crisp and rustling leaves. How beautifully they go to their graves! how gently lay themselves down and turn to mould!—painted of a thousand hues, and fit to make the beds of us living. So they troop to their last resting-place, light and frisky. They put on no weeds, but merrily they go scampering over the earth, selecting the spot, choosing a lot, ordering no iron fence, whispering all through the woods about it,—some choosing the spot where the bodies of men are mouldering beneath, and meeting them half-way. How many flutterings before they rest quietly in their graves! They that soared so loftily, how contentedly they return to dust again, and are laid low, resigned to lie and decay at the foot of the tree, and afford nourishment to new generations of their kind, as well as to flutter on high! They teach us how to die. One wonders if the time will ever come when men, with their boasted faith in immortality, will lie down as gracefully and as ripe,—with such an Indian-summer serenity will shed their bodies, as they do their hair and nails.

Let us walk in the cemetery of the leaves—this is your true Greenwood Cemetery.

Henry David Thoreau.

THE LIFE OF A LEAF

Of the young bud covered with down,
Soft as the breath of a zephyr,
Unfolding to the sun, a leaf appears,
Tender as the cheek of an infant.
At first thin, delicate, transparent,
Developing quickly, veined like the hand of a maiden,
From first to last always beautiful.
After reclining in the light of the golden sun,
And coquetting with the silver moon
For many days,
The early eager, forward frost kisses it gently,
Gemming it with beauty.
It blushes at the embrace;
Emboldened, the touch is repeated,
When lo, the ruddy color flies, and
The leaf, pale and trembling,
Drops upon the bosom of the earth.

Sung-Tie (from the Chinese).

LEAVES, SHADOWS, AND DREAMS

I have seen all things pass and all men go
Under the shadow of the drifting leaf:
Green leaf, red leaf, brown leaf,
Grey leaf blown to and fro,
  Blown to and fro.

I have seen happy dreams rise up and pass
Silent and swift as shadows on the grass:
  Grey shadows of old dreams,
  Grey beauty of old dreams,
    Grey shadows in the grass.

Fiona Macleod.

DEAD LEAVES.

Ye dainty mosses, lichens gray,
  Pressed each to each in tender fold,
And peacefully thus day by day
  Returning to your mold;

Brown leaves, that with aërial grace
  Slip from your branch, like birds a-wing,
Each leaving in the appointed place
  Its bud of future spring;—

If we, God's conscious creatures, knew
  But half your faith in our decay,
We should not tremble as we do
  When summoned, clay to clay.

But with an equal patience sweet,
  We should put off this mortal gear,
In whatsoe'er new form is meet
  Content to reappear:—

Knowing each germ of life He gives
  Must have in Him its source and rise,
Being that of His being lives
  May change, but never dies.

Ye dead leaves, dropping soft and slow,
  Ye mosses green and lichens fair,
Go to your graves, as I will go,
  For God is also there.

Dinah Maria (Mulock) Crack.

LEAVES

And where are there more lovely things
  Than leaves which dance against the sky
As tremulous as fairy wings
  Which seemed about to poise and fly?
Slim, pointed spears and banners broad—
  A thousand shapes and forms have they,
Each one all perfect and unflawed
  And dancing to the breeze's play.

The eerie whisper of the dawn
  Sets them a-rustle with its spell—
A mystic word has come and gone
  With meaning that no tongue may tell.
The leaves then have a wonder-sheen
  Of jewel-dew and silver-light,
Through which still glows their living green
  And makes of them a magic sight.

And in the moonlight, when the wood
  Is hushed with all the hush of dreams
Save for the dimly understood
  Far-singing of the sleepy streams,
The leaves have then a time-old green,
  Which ancient bronzes sometimes show,
With depths of shadow flung between
  The billows of their marvel-glow.

Call, winds of spring and April rains!
  Call over all the vales and hills,
Call down the length of rambling lanes
  And shout along the laughing rills!
Yours is the magic of the year
  Which silently and surely weaves
Of banneret and shining spear
  The lacy loveliness of leaves.

Anon.

THE LEAF

"Torn from your parent bough
Poor leaf all withered now,
  Where go you?" "I cannot tell.
Storm-stricken is the oak-tree
  Where I grew, whence I fell.
Changeful continually,
  The zephyr and hurricane
Since that day bid me flee
From deepest woods to the lea,
  From highest hills to the plain.
Where the wind carries me
  I go without fear or grief:
I go whither each one goes,—
Thither the leaf of the rose
  And thither the laurel-leaf."

Leopardi.

LAUREL LEAVES

'Tis sung in ancient minstrelsy
  That Phoebus wont to wear
The leaves of any pleasant tree
  Around his golden hair;
Till Daphne, desperate with pursuit
  Of his imperious love,
At her own prayer transformed, took root,
  A laurel in the grove.

Then did the Penitent adorn
  His brow with laurel green;
And 'mid his bright locks never shorn
  No meaner leaf was seen
And poets sage, through every age,
  About their temples wound
The bay; and conquerors thanked the Gods,
  With laurel chaplets crowned.

William Wordsworth.

LEAVES

Leaves! little leaves!—thy children, thy flatterers, thine enemies! Leaves in the wind, those who would devote thee to darkness, who scorn or miscall thee here, even as they also whose great fame shall outlast them. For all these, and the like of them, are born indeed in the spring season and soon a wind hath scattered them, and thereafter the wood peopleth itself again with another generation of leaves. And what is common to all of them is but the littleness of their lives: and yet wouldst thou love and hate, as if these things should continue forever. In a little while thine eyes also will be closed, and he on whom thou perchance hast leaned thyself be himself a burden upon another.

Think of infinite matter, and thy portion—how tiny a particle of it! of infinite time, and thine own brief point there; of destiny, and the jot thou art in it; and yield thyself readily to the wheel of Clotho, to spin thee into what web she will.

Walter Pater.

IVY LEAVES

The ivy leaves, (behind the shed),
Turned bright and blushed a rosy red.
Bit by the frost they sobered down,
And now can show but russet-brown.
Another frost and they will fall,
And there will be no leaves at all.
Thus down, through scarlet, gray, and dun,
The earth will fall into the sun.

Philip Henry Savage.

THE LEAVES

When with an airy covering
  Around the summer's woodland wall,
Or wreathing all the doors of spring,
  Or painting all the paths of fall,

The leaves go on their lonely ways,
  With naught to ask, with all to give,
They make for me the empty days
  Of winter lonelier to live.

Ethelwyn Wetherald.

GREEN LEAVES

Ah, how sublime—
The green leaves, the young leaves,
In the light of the sun!

Basho.

LEAVES

The autumnal winds, as if spellbound, had made
A natural couch of leaves in that recess,
Which seasons none disturbed, but, in the shade
Of flowering parasites, did Spring love to dress
With their sweet blooms the wintry loneliness
Of those dead leaves, shedding their stars whene'er
The wandering wind her nurslings might caress;
Whose intertwining fingers ever there
Made music wild and soft that filled the listening air.

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

DUST OF EDEN

Some dust of Eden eddies round us yet.
Some clay o' the Garden, clinging in the breast,
Down near the heart yet bides unmanifest.
Last eve in gardens strange to me I let
The path lead far; and, lo, my vision met
Old, forfeit hopes. I, as on homeward quest,
By recognizing trees was bidden rest,
And pitying leaves looked down and sighed, "Forget."

Arthur Upson.

PREDESTINATION

There is no peace for the blowing leaf,
The end of his journey he never knows:
He lifts from the ground with an upward heave
Or settles, as lulls the wind or blows.

And he ever pretends to his traveling friends
Mottled with crimson, dappled with fire,
That he knows the country to which he wends,
That he shapes his ways to his own desire.

Harry Kemp.

THE STORM IS OVER, THE LAND HUSHES TO REST

The storm is over, the land hushes to rest:
The tyrannous wind, its strength fordone,
Is fallen back in the west
To couch with the sinking sun.
The last clouds fare
With fainting speed, and their thin streamers fly
In melting drifts of the sky.
Already the birds in the air
Appear again; the rooks return to their haunt,
And one by one,
Proclaiming aloud their care,
Renew their peaceful chant.

Torn and shattered the trees their branches again reset,
They trim afresh the fair
Few green and golden leaves withheld from the storm,
And awhile will be handsome yet.
To-morrow's sun shall caress
Their remnant of loveliness:
In the quiet days for a time
Sad Autumn lingering warm
Shall humour their faded prime.

But ah! the leaves of summer that lie on the ground!
What havoc! The laughing timbrels of June,
That curtained the birds' cradles, and screened their song,
That sheltered the cooing doves at noon,
Of airy fans the delicate throng,—
Torn and scattered around:
Far out afield they lie,
In the watery furrows die,
In grassy pools of the flood they sink and drown,
Green-golden, orange, vermilion, golden and brown,
The high year's flaunting crown
Shattered and trampled down.

The day is done: the tired land looks for night:
She prays to the night to keep
In peace her nerves of delight:
While silver mist upstealeth silently,
And the broad cloud-driving moon in the clear sky
Lifts o'er the firs her shining shield,
And in her tranquil light
Sleep falls on forest and field.
See! sleep hath fallen: the trees are asleep:
The night is come. The land is wrapt in sleep.

Robert Bridges.

THE WOOD-NYMPH

(*After a picture by Burne-Jones.*)

The green leaves, ah, the green leaves cover me:
Would I might lose this unloved human life
And share the happy being of the leaves!
For lo, they live and grow and drink the sun
And sip the nectar of the heavenly showers

And have no sorrow with it; but they grow
Happily, and Pan at even blesses them.
While I, alas me hapless, I am joined
Part to their life, and all in longing to them;
Part to the gods, the bright gods whom I see
Flash through the woods at even or morn and make
The beautiful familiar trees seem strange;
And part to mortals and their little life.
Green leaves that cover me, to you I mourn,
My sisters, my more happy sisters, ye.
Rustle, rustle in the summer air,
With happy cries of birds among your boughs:
Be happy, though I am not happy. Nay,
I am not all unhappy, evermore.
One while a bird sings on the topmost bough
And my heart sings, forgetting life and death
And sorrow: so forgetting I were blest,
And bliss the gods deny me. When they walk
The forest before sundawn—Artemis,
Girt for the chase and followed by her hounds,
Queen Herê or another, ere the dawn,
Or Aphrodite with the rosy dawn—
I may not speak my longings, but they pass,
Pass unregardful to their happy heaven.
They see me not—not me, akin to gods!
These tears are vain.—When mortals pass at eve,
Treading a delicate path between the trees,
Pale mortal men and women, with their loves—
It pains me that I see them, for I know
I am not as they are, and cannot share
The little love that fills their little life—
Vain, vain; and they too pass and see me not.
Ah me, dear leaves, forsaken of gods and men,
And sad because I cannot live their life,
Will you not love me whom none others love?
Will you not teach me how to live your life,
My sisters, my more happy sisters?—live
In peace and quietness and still content,
And freshen and fade and freshen and have no care
And have no longing, full of peace to live,
Forgetting thus forever life and death
And gods and men and sorrow and delight.

Arthur Symons.

THE PATRIARCHS OF TIME

The burning bronze of the patriarch trees, with the burst of sky
in the open glade,—
Uplifted, Olympic, and unafraid.

William Rose Benét.

THE OLD OAK AND THE BRERE

There grewe an aged tree on the greene,
A goodly Oake sometime had it bene,
With armes full strong and largely displayd,
But of their leaves they were disarayde:
The bodie bigge, and mightely pight,
Throughly rooted, and of wonderous hight:
Whilome had bene the king of the field,
And mochell mast to the husband did yielde,
And with his nuts larded many swine.
But now the gray mosse marred his rine,
His bared boughes were beaten with stormes,
His toppe was bald, and wasted with wormes,
His honor decayed, his braunches sere.
Hard by his side grewe a bragging Brere,
Which proudly thrust into thelement,
And seemed to threat the firmament.
Yt was embellisht with blossomes fayre,
And thereto aye wonned to repayre
The shepheards daughters, to gather flowres,
To peinct their girlonds with his colowres:
And in his small bushes used to shrowde
The sweete nightingale singing so lowde:
Which made this foolish Brere wexe so bold,
That on a time he cast him to scold
And snebbe the good Oake, for he was old.
"Why standst there," quoth he, "thou brutish blocke?
Nor for fruict nor for shadowe serves thy stocke.
Seest how fresh my flowers bene spredde,
Dyed in lilly white and cremsin redde,
With leaves engrained in lusty greene,
Colours meete to clothe a mayden queene?
Thy wast bignes but combers the grownd,
And dirks the beauty of my blossomes round.
The mouldie mosse, which thee accloieth,
My sinamon smell too much annoieth.
Wherefore soone, I rede thee, hence remove,
Least thou the price of my displeasure prove."
So spake this bold Brere with great disdaine:
Little him answered the Oake againe,

But yielded, with shame and greefe adawed,
That of a weede he was overawed.
Yt chaunced after upon a day,
The husbandman selfe to come that way,
Of custome for to survewe his grownd,
And his trees of state in compasse rownd.
Him when the spitefull Brere had espyed,
Causlesse complained, and lowdly cryed
Unto his lord, stirring up sterne strife:
"O my liege lord, the god of my life,
Pleaseth you ponder your suppliants plaint,
Caused of wrong, and cruell constraint,
Which I your poore vassall dayly endure:
And but your goodness the same recure,
Am like for desperate doole to dye,
Through felonous force of mine enemie."
Greatly aghast with this piteous plea,
Him rested the goodman on the lea,
And badde the Brere in his plaint proceede.
With painted words tho gan this proude weede
(As most usen ambitious folke)
His colowred crime with craft to cloke.
"Ah, my soveraigne, lord of creatures all,
Thou placer of plants both humble and tall,
Was not I planted of thine owne hand,
To be the primrose of all thy land,
With flowring blossomes to furnish the prime,
And scarlot berries in sommer time?
How falls it then, that this faded Oake,
Whose bodie is sere, whose braunches broke,
Whose naked armes stretch unto the fyre,
Unto such tyrannie doth aspire;
Hindering with his shade my lovely light,
And robbing me of the swete sonnes sight?
So beate his old boughes my tender side,
That oft the bloud springeth from wounds wyde:
Untimely my flowres forced to fall,
That bene the honor of your coronall.
And oft he lets his cancker wormes light
Upon my braunches, to worke me more spight:
And oft his hoarie locks downe doth cast,
Where with my fresh flowretts bene defast.

For this, and many more such outrage,
Craving your goodlihead to aswage
The ranckorous rigour of his might,
Nought aske I, but onely to hold my right;
Submitting me to your good sufferance,
And praying to be garded from greevance."
To this the Oake cast him to replie
Well as he couth: but his enemie
Had kindled such coles of displeasure,
That the good man noulde stay his leasure,
But home him hasted with furious heate,
Encreasing his wrath with many a threate.
His harmefull hatchet he hent in hand,
(Alas, that it so ready should stand!)
And to the field alone he speedeth,
(Ay little helpe to harme there needeth.)
Anger nould let him speake to the tree,
Enaunter his rage mought cooled bee;
But to the roote bent his sturdy stroke,
And made many wounds in the wast Oake.
The axes edge did oft turne againe,
As halfe unwilling to cutte the graine:
Seemed, the sencelesse yron dyd feare,
Or to wrong holy eld did forbeare.
For it had bene an auncient tree,
Sacred with many a mysteree,
And often crost with the priestes crewe,
And often halowed with holy water dewe.
But sike fancies weren foolerie,
And broughten this Oake to this miserye.
For nought mought they quitten him from decay:
For fiercely the goodman at him did laye.
The blocke oft groned under the blow,
And sighed to see his neare overthrow.
In fine, the steele had pierced his pitth:
Tho downe to the earth he fell forthwith:
His wonderous weight made the grounde to quake,
Thearth shronke under him, and seemed to shake.
There lyeth the Oake, pitied of none.
Now stands the Brere like a lord alone,
Puffed up with pryde and vaine pleasaunce:
But all this glee had no continuaunce.

For eftsones winter gan to approche,
The blustering Boreas did encroche,
And beate upon the solitarie Brere:
For nowe no succoure was seene him nere.
Now gan he repent his pryde to late:
For naked left and disconsolate,
The byting frost nipt his stalke dead,
The watrie wette weighed downe his head,
And heaped snowe burdned him so sore,
That nowe upright he can stand no more:
And being downe, is trodde in the durt
Of cattell, and brouzed, and sorely hurt.
Such was thend of this ambitious Brere,
For scorning eld.

Edmund Spenser.

THE OAK AND THE MAN

The oak said to the forest trees:
We are nigh as old as the eagle is,
As old as the carp that takes his ease
In the pond under the terraces.

Beech and lime, it is long in truth
Since I was an acorn round and smooth.
God knows, and yet I am still a youth:
I shall live a thousand years in sooth.

Brothers, he said, lean down by me.
See, a man walketh, so small to see!
His head is not as high as my knee,
But his pride soars high as the highest tree.

He who must die! His day is brief.
He swings on the bough like a painted leaf
That the wind of autumn layeth in grief.
Friends, of us, trees, he is Lord and Chief!

He is but a babe and yet he is old.
A word, a song, and his tale is told.
He would soar to the sun but his heart grows cold,
His pride has neither stay nor hold.

Brothers, many men have we seen
By the lawns and the pond and the bowling-green
Of the ancient house that's wise and serene,
Nigh as old as myself, I ween.

We see man tottering, daisy high.
A breath, he loves, he is high as the sky—
He sees his children and he must die;
Brief as the moth and the butterfly.

Hear, ash and elm! He laughed in his beard.
The whole forest rocked as it heard—
We are *his*, we whom the ages reared,
Whom nor storm nor lightning could make afeard!

His his pride. He is weak and slight,
Yet straddles earth like a god in his might.
We are *his*. We have seen the age's flight
And this world's glory fade in a night!

The oak shook through his mighty girth.
Leagues of forest rocked to his mirth.
The man like a twig that has fallen to earth
Said: "In my woods the wind stirreth."

Katherine Tynan.

FAME

Pompey was struck in years,
And by long rest forgot to manage arms,
And being popular, sought by liberal gifts
To gain the light unstable common's love,
And joyed to hear his theatre's applause:
He lived secure, boasting his former deeds,
And thought his name sufficient to uphold him:
Like to a tall oak in a fruitful field,
Bearing old spoils and conquerors' monuments,
Who though his root be weak and his own weight
Keep him within the ground, his arms all bare,
His body, not his boughs, send forth a shade;
Though every blast it nod and seem to fall,
When all the woods about stand bolt upright,
Yet he alone is held in reverence.

Marcus Annaeus Lucanus.
Tr. by Nathan Haskell Dole.

OLD WOOD TO BURN

Old wood to burn!—hew down the highest trunk
  On Alleghanian ridges, seen afar—
  A monarch crowned with his imperial star—
Against the crimson where the sun has sunk.
The sharp axe glittering in his kingly heart
  Sends echo ringing through the golden woods,—
  And then a crashing fall!—like bursting floods
When roar the surges, and great mountains part!
The dim year wanes; I see an in-door sight,—
  Bright faces gathered round a blazing fire
  At Yule or Pentecost when, rising higher,
The frolic-mirth draws gladness from the light
  Of that old oak that towering once so vast
  Laughed at the storm, and whistled at the blast!

John Esten Cooke.

LAMENT UPON HERNE'S OAK BEING CUT DOWN

Within this dell, for many an age,
  Herne's oak uprear'd its antique head:—
Oh! most unhallow'd was the rage
  Which tore it from its native bed!

The storm that stript the forest bare
  Would yet refrain this tree to wrong,
And Time himself appear'd to spare
  A fragment he had known so long.

'Twas marked with popular regard,
  When fam'd Elizabeth was queen;
And Shakespeare, England's matchless bard,
  Made it the subject of a scene.

So honour'd, when in verdure drest,
  To me the wither'd trunk was dear;
As, when the warrior is at rest,
  His trophiod armour men revere.

That nightly Herne walk'd round this oak,
"The superstitious eld receiv'd;"
And what they of his outrage spoke,
The rising age in fear believ'd.

The hunter, in his morning range,
Would not the tree with lightness view;
To him, Herne's legend, passing strange,
In spite of scoffers, still seem'd true.

Oh, where were all the fairy crew
Who revels kept in days remote,
That round the oak no spell they drew,
Before the axe its fibres smote?

Could wishes but ensure the power,
The tree again its head should rear;
Shrubs fence it with a fadeless bower,
And these inscriptive lines appear: —

"Here, as wild Avon's poet stray'd"—
Hold!—let me check this feeble strain—
The spot by Shakespeare sacred made,
A verse like mine would but profane!

Anon.

OLD YEW

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
  That name the under-lying dead,
  Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
  And bring the firstling to the flock;
  And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
  Who changest not in any gale,
  Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom.

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
  Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
  I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

Tennyson

BURNHAM-BEECHES

A BARD, dear muse, unapt to sing,
  Your friendly aid beseeches.
Help me to touch the lyric string,
  In praise of Burnham-beeches.

What tho' my tributary lines
  Be less like Pope's than Creech's,
The theme, if not the poet, shines,
  So bright are Burnham-beeches.

O'er many a dell and upland walk,
  Their sylvan beauty reaches,
Of Birnam-wood let Scotland talk,
  While we've our Burnham-beeches.

Oft do I linger, oft return,
(Say, who my taste impeaches)
Where holly, juniper, and fern,
Spring up round Burnham-beeches.

Tho' deep embower'd their shades among,
The owl at midnight screeches,
Birds of far merrier, sweeter song,
Enliven Burnham-beeches.

If 'sermons be in stones,' I'll bet
Our vicar, when he preaches,
He'd find it easier far to get
A hint from Burnham-beeches.

Their glossy rind here winter stains,
Here the hot solstice bleaches.
Bow, stubborn oaks! bow, graceful planes!
Ye match not Burnham-beeches.

Gardens may boast a tempting show
Of nectarines, grapes, and peaches,
But daintiest truffles lurk below
The boughs of Burnham-beeches.

Poets and painters, hither hie,
Here ample room for each is
With pencil and with pen to try
His hand at Burnham-beeches.

When monks, by holy Church well schooled,
Were lawyers, statesmen, leeches,
Cured souls and bodies, judged or ruled,
Then flourished Burnham-beeches.

Skirting the convent's walls of yore,
As yonder ruin teaches,
But shaven crown and cowl no more
Shall darken Burnham-beeches.

Here bards have mused, here lovers true
Have dealt in softest speeches,
While suns declined, and, parting, threw
Their gold o'er Burnham-beeches.

O ne'er may woodman's axe resound,
Nor tempest, making breaches
In the sweet shade that cools the ground
Beneath our Burnham-beeches.

Hold! tho' I'd fain be jingling on,
My power no further reaches—
Again that rhyme? Enough—I've done,
Farewell to Burnham-beeches.

H. Luttrell.

TO THE FALLEN GUM-TREE ON MT. BAW-BAW

Yes, you lie there in state unearthly-solemn,
As though you'd been a heaven-supporting column,
Not a dead tree, of bark and foliage stript,
Gigantic Eucalypt!

Your brothers, standing still, look half-defiant,
Half in mute silence for the fallen giant:
I doubt if aught so great e'er fell so far
Except a falling star.

How tall would you have grown in course of Nature?
How old are your five hundred feet of stature?
Can you remember Noah and the flood
When you were yet a bud?

Standing beside your trunk, one almost fancies
That he beholds the Middle Age romances,
And that the stories travellers have told,
In books despised and old,

May not have been without some slight foundation,
Though they, of course, lost nothing in narration:
Herodotus we dare not now ignore
As Egypt we explore.

What have you witnessed in your long existence
On remote ranges in the Gippsland distance?
Have you seen savage empires rise and fall,
And stories tragical?

Did some black Dido, flying from her lovers,
Found a new kingdom, happy in thy covers,
Until a Maori Æneas came
And lit the cursed flame?

Or a dark Robin Hood devote his leisure
To stealing skulls, and take a savage pleasure
In making, what blacks have by way of, priests,
Uneasy at their feasts?

Or saw you earlier and gentler races,
Of nobler instincts and with fairer faces,
Die out before the circling boomerang
And the black serpent's fang?

You look like a great chip of the creation,
A relic of the former Dispensation,
When men were forced to spend nine hundred years
Here in this vale of tears.

Yet to us, creatures of a day, it's soothing
To know that, as trees go, your years are nothing:
There's little in Australia but rocks
Of old age orthodox.

Lie there in fallen majesty, I love you!
May you lie there till the last trump shall move you,
Magnificent as Cheops in his crypt,
You dead king Eucalypt!

Douglas W. Sladen.

(This tree, lying in one of the gorges of Mt. Baw-Baw, Gippsland, Victoria, measured, as it lay, 480 feet long, and where the top had been broken off, had a diameter of two feet. Our most eminent naturalist pronounces it to have been at least 40 feet longer, as it stood.)

TO THE CITY UNBEAUTIFUL

They are gone! O! implacable City,
'Twixt a night and a night,
With no pang of regret or of pity,
You have slain them outright.
Tho their beauty besought you to spare it,
To keep it forever and wear it
For your own and your children's delight,
You have fattened your greed and you merit
The squalor your streets shall inherit.

In their innocent glory and grace,
They, the primeval lords of the place,
Ere your earliest highway was trod,
Had grown old in the service of God;
And with arms lifted up, as in prayer,
Gave Him thanks for the sunlight and air,
For the nourishing moss at their feet;
And the thrushes that made their retreat
In the heart of this Eden so long,
For their lodging gave tribute of song.
E'en the violets, dotting the sward,
Breathing perfume of prayer to the Lord,
Paid in full for their leasehold; but you—
In the service of Mammon, you grew
To a huddle of houses and mills,
Spreading squalor through hollows and hills,
Till your grimy arms reached through your smoke
To this grove of the Poplar and Oak.

They are gone! O! implacable City,
'Twixt a night and a night,
With no pang of regret or of pity,
You have slain them outright.
Tho their beauty besought you to spare it,
To keep it forever and wear it
For your own and your children's delight,
You have fattened your greed and you merit
The squalor your streets shall inherit.

T. A. Daly.

THE SEQUOIA, "WILLIAM McKINLEY"

He who in dying blessed the peaceful trees
That lulled the slow grief of the lapsing year
Towards tranquil death, is best remembered here.
He leaves a name that shall make holier these
Huge temple pillars where the organing breeze,
Always at requiem, fills the atmosphere,
And does to their eternal roof uprear
Perpetual music of great memories.
Men raised rich temples in the days antique
To serve memorial unto virtues wan
Beside his. Him no rites shall celebrate
Gold-bought, ephemeral as their altar-reek—
But, while time is, he here in solemn state
Shall hold fit place in Nature's pantheon.

Arthur Upson.

THE SEQUOIA AND GENERAL GRANT

The Big Tree (sequoia gigantea) is Nature's forest masterpiece, and, so far as I know, the greatest of living things. It belongs to an ancient stock, as its remains in old rocks show, and has a strange air of other days about it, a thoroughbred look inherited from the long ago—the auld lang syne of trees.

Who of all the dwellers of the plains and prairies and fertile home forests of round-headed oak and maple, hickory and elm, ever dreamed that earth could bear such growths,—trees that the familiar pines and firs seem to know nothing about, lonely, silent, serene, with a physiognomy almost godlike; and so old, thousands of them still living had already counted their years by tens of centuries when Columbus set sail from Spain and were in the vigor of youth or middle age when the star led the Chaldean sages to the infant Saviour's cradle! As far as man is concerned they are the same yesterday, today, and forever, emblems of permanence.

No description can give any adequate idea of their singular majesty, much less of their beauty. Excepting the sugar-pine, most of their neighbors with pointed tops seem to be forever shouting Excelsior, while the Big Tree, though soaring above them all, seems satisfied, its rounded head, poised lightly as a

cloud, giving no impression of trying to go higher. Only in youth does it show like other conifers a heavenward yearning, keenly aspiring with a long quick-growing top. Indeed the whole tree for the first century or two, or until a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet high, is arrow-head in form, and compared with the solemn rigidity of age, is as sensitive to the wind as a squirrel tail. The lower branches are gradually dropped as it grows older, and the upper ones thinned out until comparatively few are left. These, however, are developed to great size, divide again and again, and terminate in bossy rounded masses of leafy branchlets. While the head becomes dove-shaped. Then poised in fullness of strength and beauty, stern and solemn in mien, it glows with eager, enthusiastic life, quivering to the tip of every leaf and branch and far-reaching root, calm as a granite dome, the first to feel the touch of the rosy beams of the morning, the last to bid the sun good-night.

John Muir.

INCENSE OF THOUGHT UP LEAFY NAVES

My life shall grow like trees both tall and fair
That rise and spread and bloom toward fuller fruit each year.

George Eliot.

A FOREST HYMN

The groves were God's first temples. Ere man learned
To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them—ere he framed
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems; in the darkling wood,
Amid the cool and silence, he knelt down,
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks
And supplication. For his simple heart
Might not resist the sacred influences
Which, from the stilly twilight of the place,
And from the gray old trunks that high in heaven
Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the sound
Of the invisible breath that swayed at once
All their green tops, stole over him, and bowed
His spirit with the thought of boundless power
And inaccessible majesty. Ah, why
Should we, in the world's riper years, neglect
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore
Only among the crowd, and under roofs
That our frail hands have raised? Let me at least,
Here, in the shadow of this aged wood,
Offer one hymn—thrice happy, if it find
Acceptance in His ear.

Father, thy hand
Hath rear'd these venerable columns, thou
Didst weave this verdant roof. Thou didst look down
Upon the naked earth, and forthwith rose
All these fair ranks of trees. They, in thy sun
Budded, and shook their green leaves in thy breeze,
And shot towards heaven. The century-living crow,
Whose birth was in their tops, grew old and died
Among their branches, till, at last, they stood,
As now they stand, massy, and tall, and dark,
Fit shrine for humble worshiper to hold
Communion with his Maker. These dim vaults,
These winding aisles, of human pomp or pride
Report not. No fantastic carvings show
The boast of our vain race to change the form

Of thy fair works. But thou art here—thou fill'st
The solitude. Thou art in the soft winds
That run along the summit of these trees
In music;—thou art in the cooler breath,
That from the inmost darkness of the place,
Comes, scarcely felt—the barky trunks, the ground,
The fresh moist ground, are all instinct with thee.
Here is continual worship;—nature, here,
In the tranquillity that thou dost love,
Enjoys thy presence. Noiselessly, around,
From perch to perch, the solitary bird
Passes; and yon clear spring, that, 'midst its herbs,
Wells softly forth, and visits the strong roots
Of half the mighty forest, tells no tale
Of all the good it does. Thou hast not left
Thyself without a witness, in these shades,
Of thy perfections. Grandeur, strength, and grace
Are here to speak of thee. This mighty oak—
By whose immovable stem I stand and seem
Almost annihilated—not a prince,
In all that proud old world beyond the deep,
E'er wore his crown as loftily as he
Wears the green coronal of leaves with which
Thy hand has graced him. Nestled at his root
Is beauty, such as blooms not in the glare
Of the broad sun. That delicate forest flower,
With scented breath, and look so like a smile,
Seems as it issues from the shapeless mould,
An emanation of the indwelling Life,
A visible token of the upholding Love,
That are the soul of this wide universe.

My heart is awed within me when I think
Of the great miracle that still goes on,
In silence, round me—the perpetual work
Of thy creation, finished, yet renewed
Forever. Written on thy works I read
The lesson of thy own eternity.
Lo! all grow old and die—but see again,
How on the faltering footsteps of decay
Youth presses—ever gay and beautiful youth
In all its beautiful forms. These lofty trees

Wave not less proudly that their ancestors
Moulder beneath them. Oh, there is not lost
One of earth's charms: upon her bosom yet,
After the flight of untold centuries,
The freshness of her far beginning lies
And yet shall lie. Life mocks the idle hate
Of his arch-enemy Death—yea, seats himself
Upon the tyrant's throne—the sepulchre,
And of the triumphs of his ghastly foe
Makes his own nourishment. For he came forth
From thine own bosom, and shall have no end.

There have been holy men who hid themselves
Deep in the woody wilderness, and gave
Their lives to thought and prayer, till they outlived
The generation born with them, nor seemed
Less aged than the hoary trees and rocks
Around them;—and there have been holy men
Who deemed it were not well to pass life thus.
But let me often to these solitudes
Retire, and in thy presence reassure
My feeble virtue. Here its enemies,
The passions, at thy plainer footsteps shrink
And tremble and are still. O God! when thou
Dost scare the world with tempests, set on fire
The heavens with falling thunderbolts, or fill,
With all the waters of the firmament,
The swift dark whirlwind that uproots the woods
And drowns the villages; when, at thy call,
Uprises the great deep and throws himself
Upon the continent, and overwhelms
Its cities—who forgets not, at the sight
Of these tremendous tokens of thy power,
His pride, and lays his strifes and follies by?
Oh, from these sterner aspects of thy face
Spare me and mine, nor let us need the wrath
Of the mad unchained elements to teach
Who rules them. Be it ours to meditate,
In these calm shades, thy milder majesty,
And to the beautiful order of thy works
Learn to conform the order of our lives.

William Cullen Bryant.

IN THE STRENGTH OF THE TREES

Lorn, hooded woodlands, wintry, bare,
  Against the wild November sky;
With what hushed patience, in your care,
  You let the biting blast go by.

It roars like madness round the world,
  And strikes you like a shoreward sea,
Soon far its pinions rude are hurled,
  And you, erect and free.

Beneath the comfort of your sere,
  Bleak dream of loud November woe,
The frail, fair children of the year
  Are cradled in your heart's warm glow.

There sheltered 'neath your iron might,
  That fronts the icy wolfhound's breath,
The hopes of all the year lie light,
  In frosty dream of death.

I, too, have felt the wintry rage
  And tooth of rude, unkindly fate;
Would that I might its blasts engage,
  Like you, possess my soul and wait:—

Like you, in patience, meet the storms
  Of life's November's surge and stress;
Strong 'gainst its ill of iron alarms,
  Tender toward its great helplessness.

So build my life like yours above
  Earth's dream of frail futurity,
In all that godlike strength that love
  Ordained that it should be.

Wilfred Campbell.

THE TREES

I

Now, in the thousandth year,
When April's near,
Now comes it that the great ones of the earth
Take all their mirth
Away with them, far off, to orchard-places,—
Nor they nor Solomon arrayed like these,—
To sun themselves at ease;
To breathe of wind-swept spaces;
To see some miracle of leafy graces;—
To catch the out-flowing rapture of the trees,
Considering the lilies.
—Yes. And when
Shall they consider Men?
(O showering May-clad tree,
Bear yet awhile with me.)

II

For now at last, they have beheld the trees.
Lo, even these!—
The men of sounding laughter and low fears;
The women of light laughter, and no tears;
The great ones of the town.
And those, of most renown,
That once sold doves,—now grown so penny-wise
To bargain with forlorner merchandise,—
They buy and sell, they buy and sell again,
The life-long toil of men.
Worn with their market strife to dispossess
The blind,—the fatherless,
They too go forth, to breathe of budding trees,
And woods with beckoning wonders new unfurled.
Yes, even these:
The money-changers and the Pharisees;
The rulers of the darkness of this world.
(O choiring Summer tree,
Bear yet awhile with me.)

III

For now, behold their heart's desire is thrall
To simpleness.—O new delight, unguessed,
In very rest!
And precious beyond all,
A garden-place, a garden with a wall!
To the green earth! All bountiful to bless
Hearts sickening with excess.
To the green earth, whose blithe replenishments
Shall fresh the jaded sense!
To the green earth, the dust-corrupted soul
Returns to be made whole.
For now it comes indeed,
They will go forth, all they, to see a reed
So shaken by the wind.
Men are no longer blind
To aught, save human kind.
(*O mellowing August tree,*
Bear yet awhile with me.)

IV

The wonder this. For some there are no trees;
Or in the trees no beauty and no mirth:—
Those dullest millions, pent
In life-long banishment
From all the gifts and creatures of the earth,
Shut in the inner darkness of the town;
Those blighted things you see,
But the Sun sees not, at its going down:—
Warped outcasts of some human forestry;
Blind victims of the blind,
Wreckt ones and dark of mind,
With the poor fruit, after their piteous kind.
And if you take some Old One to the fields,
To see what Nature yields
With fullest hands to men already free,
It well may be,
As on some indecipherable book
The Guest will look,
With eyes too old,—too old, too dim to see;

Too old, too old to learn;
Or to discern—
Before it slips away,
The joy of such a late half-holiday!
Proffer those starved eyes your belated cup:
They look not up.
Too late, too late for any sky to do
Brief kindness with its blue.
And what behold they, then?
In the shamed moment, when
Old eyes bow down again?
Down in the night and blackness of the heart,
The drowned things start.
And he recks nothing of the meadow air,
Because of what is There.
Lost things of hope and sorrow without tongue:
The human lilies, sprung
Out of the ooze, and trodden,
Even as they breathed and clung!
Lost lilies, bruised and sodden;
Lost faces, gleaming there,
Where misery blasphemes the sacred young!
Mute outcry, most, of those
Small suffering bands defrauded of their rose;
Faces the daylight shuns;
Ruinous faces of the little ones,—
Pale witness, unaware.
Starved lips, and withering blood—
O broken in the bud!—
Blank eyes, and blighted hair.
(*O golden, golden tree!*
Bear yet awhile with me.)
So is it, haply, when
Dull eyes look up, and then
Dull eyes look down again.
Waste no vain holiday on such as these;
For them there is no joy in blossomed trees.

V

For them there is no joy in blossomed trees.
And with what eye-shut ease
We leave them, at the last, for company,
The Tree,
Whose two stark boughs no springtime yet unfurled,
Ever, since time began;
Nor bloom so strange to see!—
Behold, the Man,
With His two arms outstretched to fold the world.

Josephine Preston Peabody.

THE SEEING MAN

Old Michael Pat he said to me
He saw an angel in a tree.
He knew I'd never, never doubt him,
For what would Heaven be without them?
The angel laughed for very glee
And sang out loud: "Hey! come with me!"
Old Michael felt a creeping kind
Of wonder in his humble mind,
And, hardly knowing what to say,
Ran where the angel showed the way.
The lambs were running on the hills,
Glad laughter echoed from the rills,
And many hidden little birds
Talked pleasant things in singing words,
He followed up a mountain then
And saw a crowd of singing men
Approaching to a Crown of Light
Wherein they took a great delight.
He danced and sang and whooped and crew
To see the Lord of all he knew
Surrounded by the living songs
Of stars and men in countless throngs,
And then he died to life again
And shovelled with the strength of ten.
He taught me how to say my letters,
And take my hat off to my betters,

And when I asked for fairy stories
He told me of angelic glories.
He was a lovely farmer, he
Had seen an angel in a tree.

Edward J. O'Brien.

THE TREE

He sang as if the heavens held only two things: God and himself.

Was his voice heard as the roving Spirit leaned toward the Tree of the Skies
And parted the leaves of the stars,
And peered through at the tiny green blossom, the Earth,
And on Earth, the little singer, standing and praising the Lord!

Yet here I am: the petal of earth swaying in an ocean of far star-leaves:
Yet here I am, living, aware, and singing with loud full voice.

James Oppenheim.

PARTING

Mine oft-reiterated pray'rs in vain
The parting guest would stay: Oh, cherry-flow'rs!
Pour down your petals, that from out these bow'rs
He ne'er may find the homeward path again!

From the Japanese.

MY NATIVE TREES

My native trees! If heaven grant that I shall return to gaze on you, my friends of old, shall I still find you? Ye, around whom I wandered once a child.

How much I owe you, oh, my native trees! I, a poor shot, escaping from the mockery of my friends for my missed quarry, how often, in your stillness, I hunted dreams, when in the wild hunting grounds I forgot the chase and sat me on a log. And around me the earth was silver with the hoary-bearded moss mingled with the deep blue of black and rotten berries. And further flamed heathery knolls decked with red berries like a rosary's coral beads. All stillness round me. Branches swung

on high like green thick drooping clouds. Somewhere above their tranquil arch the gale raved, wailing, roaring, howling, crashing, thundering strange deafening uproar! It seemed that over head was rocking a roaring sea.

Below, it was as though the ruins of cities lay there. A fallen oak like a great hulk protruded from the earth. Upon it leant, like shattered walls and pillars, there branching logs, here beams half rotten, fenced round with a wall of grass. I tremble to look inside the barricade: there sit the lords of the forest, boars, bears, and wolves. At the entrance lie the half-gnawed bones of the unwary guest. Often a stag's two horns steal through the green grass like fountains twain. And yellow-girdled beasts flash through the trees, and like a falling star vanish deep in the wood.

And again all is still below. Lightly the wood-pecker taps on the fir, and flies far away. He is seen no more. He was hidden: but he ceases not to tap with his beak like a child when it hides, calling "I spy." Nearer at hand sits the squirrel, holding a nut, which she gnaws, in her little paw. Her tufted tail droops over her eyes like the plumes on a cuirassier's helmet. Even behind this veil, she peers, all round. She sees the intruder, and then, the woodland dancer, she leaps from tree to tree, twinkling, flashing past like lightning, till down an invisible cleft in the tree trunk she runs, like a Dryad returning to her native tree. And again all is still.

Adam Mickiewicz.

UNDER THE WASHINGTON ELM, CAMBRIDGE

April 27, 1861.

Eighty years have passed, and more,
Since under the brave old tree
Our fathers gathered in arms, and swore
They would follow the sign their banners bore,
And fight till the land was free.

Half of their work was done,
Half is left to do,—
Cambridge, and Concord, and Lexington!
When the battle is fought and won,
What shall be told of you?

Hark!—'tis the south-wind moans,—
Who are the martyrs down?
Ah, the marrow was true in your children's bones
That sprinkled with blood the cursèd stones
Of the murder-haunted town!

What if the storm-clouds blow?
What if the green leaves fall?
Better the crashing tempest's throe
Than the army of worms that gnawed below;
Trample them one and all!

Then, when the battle is won,
And the land from traitors free,
Our children shall tell of the strife begun
When Liberty's second April sun
Was bright on our brave old tree!

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

THE TREES OF HARVARD

I

Religion is the shadow of a tree
Cast by a star upon the soul of man
Tingeing its substance with solemnity,
For under mystic boughs the soul began
Its progress from the primal Caliban
Toward reason, and the beauty yet to be.
Therefore perchance it is
That in trees we treasure
Our own tranquillities,
Making them the measure
Of our own growth—our griefs and ecstasies.

II

Dear stricken elms of Harvard, while even thus
Now with your wounds we bleed, still, still it seems
Your vanished verdure—multitudinous
With twinkling dryads of our boyish dreams,
With orioles of song, and golden gleams

Of youth—abides, a quickening part of us:
Abides, as though it would
  By some spell enchanted
Disperse this tragic mood,
  By your fate implanted,
To share with you a secret brotherhood.

III

Your branches die, but not the dreams they bred:
  They, like immortal choirs of dawn, displace
Your silent ruin with the singing dead.
  Still in your shadowed walks, with shadowy pace,
  The Concord poet lifts his star-pale face,
The Elmwood statesman holds his lyric tread.
Still through your silences
  Float the far Hosannas
Of that undaunted press,
  Brave with tattered banners,
Filing from Lexington to the Wilderness.

IV

Yes, dreams abide; yet fungus will infect
  The living tissue and the limb will fall:
Alike in soaring elm and intellect
  The cankering worm will bore, and spin the pall
  Of aspiration; yet if this were all
Our world of dreams had long ago been wrecked.
It is not all: for growth,
  Plying deep substitution,
Outwears decay and sloth,
  While, with sure revolution,
Youth conquers age, and life o'erlords them both.

V

Then life, give way for life! Old elms forlorn,
  The scion oaks supplant you, and you die;
Shorn are your locks of golden days—all shorn
  (Save in our dreams) of glory—so, good-bye!
  But hail, strong-limbed in young integrity,

Hail, glory of our Harvard boys unborn!
Death is a churlish thing;
  Life, life alone is royal!
Red oak, red oak, we bring
  Hearts alive, hearts loyal:
The king is dead: Long live our crimson king!

Percy Mackaye.

THE CHICKAMAUGA OAK

September came with harvest sun,
  The alchemist of old,
Across the fields of green to run
  And turn them into gold.
But here was neither corn nor grain,
  Nor need of alchemist,
For verdant vale and upland plain
  No busy plow had kissed.

The men who once had turned the sod
  And scattered here the seed
O'er other hills and valleys trod
  To serve their dearest creed.
A hotter sun shone overhead,
  The cannon's sulphur breath;
They sowed the seed whose bloom is red
  And final fruit is death.

Here stood the Chickamauga oak
  That cool September morn
And from its night of sleep awoke
  To hear the blare of horn,
To hear the tramp of marching feet,
  The steady clank of steel,
The hoofbeats of the horses fleet
  And rumble of the wheel.

Around it broke the crimson gale,
  Up rose the clouds of war;
Down poured the slanted sheets of hail
  On Chickamauga's shore.

Red lightning flashed from barking gun
While cannon thundered by,
And son and sire and sire and son
Exchanged their battle cry.

Above them neutral still it stood,
The Chickamauga oak,
Nor questioned whose the purpose good
And whose the wrongful stroke;
And, when the line of battle passed
Where broke the storm anew,
Impartially its shade it cast
On fallen gray and blue.

The battle long is ended now,
The fife and drum are still;
Again the men of Georgia plow
The fertile field and hill.
Again the bright September sun
Turns waving grain to gold;
Again the crystal waters run
As in the days of old.

Still stands the Chickamauga oak—
But now beneath its shade
Lie those who parried stroke and stroke
And wielded blade and blade.
For north and south, for blue and gray,
Impartially it grieves,
And lays on both their graves to-day
The cerement of its leaves.

Douglas Malloch.

THE CEDAR TREE

The cedars of Lebanon are renowned in sacred and secular annals as the most magnificent trees of the East. The Psalmist calls them "the trees of the Lord." They are held in great veneration by the Syrian people to this day, a holiday being set apart by them for the Feast of the Cedars.

The cedar belongs to the family of pines, the resinous, aro-

matic, needle-leafed group of trees, which, as silver fir and larches, crown the mountains,—and, as spruce and hemlock, fringe the deciduous forests and winding water-courses at their base.

Did you ever wander alone into the heart of a dense pine forest in a summer day? It is one of the quietest, grandest scenes in Nature. The busy noises of the human world, and even the dreamy murmur of the woods and waters, are unheard there. No song of bird, or hum of insect, intrudes upon the solemn stillness of the place. The only sound is the plaintive whisper of the low wind sighing through the harp-like branches overhead, or the mournful coo of the dove in some distant solitude, making the aisles of the wood sacred as a sanctuary. There your soul communes with God in the sweet serenity of silence; there you breathed your inmost wants as a prayer into the ear of your listening Father; there, in the hush and calm of the ancient forest temple, you worshiped and were blest. There was a hallowed influence in the air, the scene, the hour, which puts you in communication with heaven; and precious truths were told you there in psalms of tenderness, sweeter than the melody of flute or organ to the pensive spirit. The cathedral-like quiet was balmed and holy with fragrance, as if pervaded with the incense of sacrifice; the high dome of the sky seemed to arch more closely over you with its celestial blue; and the dark green foliage about you was trembling with the harmony of vespers chanted only for your soul. Then your thoughts were called away from the fading vanities and turbulent excitements of the world, and directed to the serene and imperishable glories of the heavenly Paradise.

Alexander Clark.

TREE-BURIAL

Near our southwestern border, when a child
Dies in the cabin of an Indian wife,
She makes its funeral-couch of delicate furs,
Blankets and bark, and binds it to the bough
Of some broad branching tree with leathern thongs
And sinews of the deer. A mother once
Wrought at this tender task, and murmured thus:
"Child of my love, I do not lay thee down
Among the chilly clods where never comes

The pleasant sunshine. There the greedy wolf
Might break into thy grave and tear thee thence,
And I should sorrow all my life. I make
Thy burial-place here, where the light of day
Shines round thee, and the airs that play among
The boughs shall rock thee.

"And now, oh wind, that here among the leaves
Dost softly rustle, breathe thou ever thus
Gently, and put not forth thy strength to tear
The branches and let fall their precious load,
A prey to foxes. Thou, too, ancient sun,
Beneath whose eye the seasons come and go,
And generations rise and pass away,
While thou dost never change—oh, call not up,
With thy strong heats, the dark, grim thunder-cloud,
To smite this tree with bolts of fire, and rend
Its trunk and strew the earth with splintered boughs.
Ye rains, fall softly on the couch that holds
My darling. There the panther's spotted hide
Shall turn aside the shower; and be it long,
Long after thou and I have met again,
Ere summer wind or winter rain shall waste
This couch and all that now remains of thee,
To me thy mother. Meantime, while I live,
With each returning sunrise I shall seem
To see thy waking smile, and I shall weep;
And when the sun is setting I shall think
How, as I watched thee, o'er thy sleepy eyes
Drooped the smooth lids, and laid on the round cheek
Their lashes, and my tears will flow again;
And often, at those moments, I shall seem
To hear again the sweetly prattled name
Which thou didst call me by, and it will haunt
My home till I depart to be with thee."

William Cullen Bryant.

"CHLOE"

Night wind sighing through the poplar leaves,
Trembling of the aspen, shivering of the willow,
Every leafy voice of all the night-time grieves,
Mourning, weeping over Chloe's pillow.

Chloe, fresher than the breeze of dawn,
Fairer than the larches in their young spring glory,
Brighter than the glow-worms on the dewy lawn,
Hear the dirge the green trees sing to end your Story:—

"Chloe lived and Chloe loved: She brought new gladness,
Hope and life and all things good to all who met her;
Only, dying, wept to know the lifelong sadness
Willed, against her will, to those who can't forget her."

E. Nesbit Bland.

THE POPLAR FIELD

The Poplars are felled; farewell to the shade,
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade;
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took a view
Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew;
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade!

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
And the scene where his melody charmed me before
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
Have a being less durable even than he.

William Cowper.

HAST THOU NOT SEEN A TREE

Hast thou not see a tree upon a hill,
  Whose unlist branches reachen far to sight?
When furious tempests do the heaven fill,
  It shaketh dire, in dole and much affright;
Whilst the dwarf floweret, with humility dight,
  Standeth unhurt, unquashéd by the storm.
Such is a picte of life; the man of might
  Is tempest-chafed, his woe great as his form;
Thyself, a floweret of a small account,
Wouldst harder feel the wind, as thou didst higher mount.

T. Chatterton.

THE LONE TREE ON THE STREET

A deep groove in the city's stony face,
  An open wound alive with hounding pain:
    For soothing to efface.
Toiling heavenward and alone here towers
  A mighty elm, the spare lar of a tribe
  Destroyed by dying hands who'd fain inscribe
    Their sad and transient powers.

Like a warning prophet breathing hoarse despair,
  Forlornly it bends above the heedless throng
  And sways as if in supplicating song
    Which dies in the murk mid-air.
Beneath, a soulless glory reigns, like Death
  At ruthless war with Life which gave it birth;
  And loud throats simulate Life's mirth,
    Which only through it whispereth.

Contorted by the blighting clutch of time
  Its trunk, and bare with wounds of passing wheels,
Yet it lifts a thousand mother-arms sublime
  Each big with a life that reels
As does a lover's heart when clasped in first embrace,
  And too with all the purpose of his joy.
Man, pause a moment in your joyless race
  And let your starving soul employ
Your frail life ere you go your fate-snared way—
  A thought is here expressed from out the mind
  That bore us all . . . mute elf and humankind.

Hear ye not oft the wee, small voice within—
  The voice which mourns when sighs and weeping fail
And speaks when hearts are whelmed o'er in the din
  Of death when entire nations quail?
It bids you speak the wonder that you feel
  With shaping hands, in shrines for worshiping;
With imaging or music-rhythmed heel . . .
  Pause for a breath, your soul demands free wing!

Minds never tuned to fathom inly speech,
  But only nether impulses and needs!
What boots it that a wonder-sign which leads
  Your yearning soul to reach
Its secret origins and ends beyond
  This craven and confused moment: life,
Pleads for a breath of surcease to blind strife?—
  That you may seek the bond
Which makes your mind transmutant of the world,
  Its voices inarticulate, and its plan?
Here the tree has wrought a tender leaf, and mighty Man
  His fate . . . which has more unfurled?

Samuel Henry Marcus.

SOUTH-WEST WIND IN THE WOODLAND

The silence of preluded song—
Æolian silence charms the woods;
Each tree a harp, whose foliaged strings
Are waiting for the master's touch
To sweep them into storms of joy,
Stands mute and whispers not; the birds
Brood dumb in their foreboding nests,
Save here and there a chirp or tweet,
That utters fear or anxious love,
Or when the ouzel sends a swift
Half warble, shrinking back again
His golden bill, or when aloud
The storm-cock warns the dusking hills
And villages and valleys round:
For lo, beneath those ragged clouds
That skirt the opening west, a stream
Of yellow light and windy flame
Spreads lengthening southward, and the sky
Begins to gloom, and o'er the ground
A moan of coming blasts creeps low
And rustles in the crisping grass;
Till suddenly with mighty arms
Outspread, that reach the horizon round,
The great South-West drives o'er the earth,
And loosens all his roaring robes
Behind him, over heath and moor.
He comes upon the neck of night,
Like one that leaps a fiery steed
Whose keen black haunches quivering shine
With eagerness and haste, that needs
No spur to make the dark leagues fly!
Whose eyes are meteors of speed;
Whose mane is as a flashing foam;
Whose hoofs are travelling thunder-shocks;—
He comes, and while his growing gusts,
Wild couriers of his reckless course,
Are whistling from the daggered gorse,
And hurrying over fern and broom,
Midway, far off, he feigns to halt
And gather in his streaming train.

Now, whirring like an eagle's wing
Preparing for a wide blue flight;
Now, flapping like a sail that tacks
And chides the wet bewildered mast;
Now, screaming like an anguish'd thing
Chased close by some down-breathing beak;
Now, wailing like a breaking heart,
That will not wholly break, but hopes
With hope that knows itself in vain;
Now, threatening like a storm-charged cloud;
Now, cooling like a woodland dove;
Now, up again in roar and wrath
High soaring and wide sweeping; now,
With sudden fury dashing down
Full-force on the awaiting woods.
Long waited there, for aspens frail
That tinkle with a silver bell,
To warn the Zephyr of their love,
When danger is at hand, and wake
The neighbouring boughs, surrendering all
Their prophet harmony of leaves,
Had caught his earliest windward thought,
And told it trembling; naked birk
Down showering her dishevelled hair,
And like a beauty yielding up
Her fate to all the elements,
Had swayed in answer; hazels close,
Thick brambles and dark brushwood tufts,
And briared brakes that line the dells
With shaggy beetling brows, had sung
Shrill music, while the tattered flaws
Tore over them, and now the whole
Tumultuous concords, seized at once
With savage inspiration,—pine,
And larch, and beech, and fir, and thorn,
And ash, and oak, and oakling, rave
And shriek, and shout, and whirl, and toss,
And stretch their arms, and split, and crack,
And bend their stems, and bow their heads,
And grind, and groan, and lion-like
Roar to the echo-peopled hills
And ravenous wilds, and crake-like cry

With harsh delight, and cave-like call
With hollow mouth, and harp-like thrill
With mighty melodies, sublime,
From clumps of column'd pines that wave
A lofty anthem to the sky,
Fit music for a prophet's soul—
And like an ocean gathering power,
And murmuring deep, while down below
Reigns calm profound;—not trembling now
The aspens, but like freshening waves
That fall upon a shingly beach;—
And round the oak a solemn roll
Of organ harmony ascends,
And in the upper foliage sounds
A symphony of distant seas.

The voice of nature is abroad
This night; she fills the air with balm;
Her mystery is o'er the land;
And who that hears her now and yields
His being to her yearning tones,
And seats his soul upon her wings,
And broadens o'er the wind-swept world
With her, will gather in the flight
More knowledge of her secret, more
Delight in her beneficence,
Than hours of musing, or the lore
That lives with men could ever give!
Nor will it pass away when morn
Shall look upon the lulling leaves,
And woodland sunshine, Eden-sweet,
Dreams o'er the paths of peaceful shade;—
For every elemental power
Is kindred to our hearts, and once
Acknowledged, wedded, once embraced,
Once taken to the unfettered sense,
Once claspt into the naked life,
The union is eternal.

George Meredith.

COMFORTS AND CONSOLATIONS

FOREST HOME

O forest-mother, I have stayed
  Too long away from thee;
Let me come home for these few hours
  That from the world are free.

Oh! mother, they have saddened me
  With all their foolish din;
Lowly I knock at thy green gate;
  Dear mother, let me in.

Let all sweet winds from all fair dells,
  And whispering breath of pine,
Pursue and lure the wanderer
  Back to thy rest divine.

Edward Rowland Sill.

And shall I clutch at dear departing things,
  While leaf and tree in silent splendor part?
Go, little joys! and welcome fluttering wings
  That brush my clinging sorrows from my heart.

Charlotte Wilson.

GOOD COMPANY

To-day I have grown taller from walking with the trees
The seven sister-poplars who go softly in a line;
And I think my heart is whiter for its parley with a star
That trembled out at nightfall and hung above the pine.

The call-note of a redbird from the cedars in the dusk
Woke his happy mate within me to an answer free and fine;
And a sudden angel beckoned from a column of blue smoke—
Lord, who am I that they should stoop—these holy folk of Thine?

Karle Wilson Baker.

A WOOD LYRIC

Into the stilly woods I go,
Where the shades are deep and the wind-flowers blow,
And the hours are dreamy and lone and long,
And the power of silence is greater than song.
Into the stilly woods I go,
Where the leaves are cool and the wind-flowers blow.

When I go into the stilly woods,
And know all the flowers in their sweet, shy hoods,
The tender leaves in their shimmer and sheen
Of darkling shadow, diaphanous green,
In those haunted halls where my footstep falls,
Like one who enters cathedral walls,
A spirit of beauty floods over me,
As over a swimmer the waves of the sea,
That strengthens and glories, refreshens and fills,
Till all my inner heart wakens and thrills
With a new and a glad and a sweet delight,
And a sense of the infinite out of sight,
Of the great unknown that we may not know,
But only feel with an inward glow

When into the great, glad woods we go.
O life-worn brothers, come with me
Into the wood's hushed sanctity,
Where the great, cool branches are heavy with June,
And the voices of summer are strung in tune;
Come with me, O heart out-worn,
Or spirit whom life's brute-struggles have torn,
Come, tired and broken and wounded feet,
Where the walls are greening, the floors are sweet,
The roofs are breathing and heaven's airs meet.

Wilfred Campbell.

THE SYLVAN LIFE

When in the woods I wander all alone,
The woods that are my solace and delight,
Which I more covet than a prince's throne,
My toil by day and canopy by night;
(Light heart, light foot, light food, and slumber light,
These lights shall light me to old age's gate,
While monarchs, whom rebellious dreams affright,
Heavy with fear, death's fearful summons wait;)
Whilst here I wander, pleased to be alone,
Weighing in thought the world's no-happiness,
I cannot choose but wonder at its moan,
Since so plain joys the woody life can bless:
Then live who may where honied words prevail,
I with the deer, and with the nightingale!

Edward, Lord Thurlow.

WALDEINSAMKEIT

I do not count the hours I spend
In wandering by the sea;
The forest is my loyal friend,
Like God it useth me.

In plains that room for shadows make
Of skirting hills to lie,
Bound in by streams which give and take
Their colors from the sky;

Or on the mountain-crest sublime,
Or down the oaken glade,
O what have I to do with time?
For this the day was made.

Cities of mortals woe-begone
Fantastic cares deride,
But in the serious landscape lone
Stern benefit abides.

Sheen will tarnish, honey cloy,
And merry is only a mask of sad,
But, sober on a fund of joy,
The woods at heart are glad.

There the great Planter plants
Of fruitful worlds the grain,
And with a million spells enchants
The souls that walk in pain.

Still on the seeds of all he made
The rose of beauty burns;
Through times that wear and forms that fade,
Immortal youth returns.

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

GREEN BOUGHS OF HOME

Green boughs of home, that come between
Mine eyes and this far distant scene,
I see whene'er my thought escapes,
Your old serene familiar shapes;

Each lissom willow tree that dips
Into the stream her golden whips,
The sassafras beside the gate,
Where twilight strollers linger late;

The hemlock groups that dimly hold
Their own against the noonday gold,
The maple lines that give the view
A green or luminous avenue;

Those oldest apple trees whose forms
Have braved a hundred years of storms,
And turn a face as blithe and free
To greet their second century;

The younger orchard's heavy edge,
Framed in the honey locust hedge;
Fruit-flushed, snow-burdened or bloom-bright,
It comes to my home-longing sight;

The billowly woods across the road,
Where all the winds of heaven strode,
And sang in every towering stem,
Would that I were at home with them!

For under these down-bending boughs
A thousand tender memories house,
Oh, while your old companions roam,
Your peace be theirs, green boughs of home!

Ethelwyn Wetherald.

MY LEGACY

The little tree I planted out
  And often muse upon,
May be alive to grow and thrive
And out into the sunlight strive,
  When I am dead and gone.

So it shall be my legacy
  To toilers in the sun,
So sweet its shade, each man and maid
May be induced to take a spade
  And plant another one.

Ethelwyn Wetherald.

THE EARTH AND THE HEAVEN, IN THE EVENING

The Earth draws off her robe of broidered flowers,
  And in green kirtle standeth for a space
Ere she doth wrap her for the slumberous hours
  In her white shift of mist, and veils her face:
She standeth in her kirtle green, and saith
Her evening prayer, whose incense is her breath.

Here are no unquiet sounds and no alarms;
  Hence all that is not gentle doth depart.
She takes her weary children in her arms
  That she may warm them at her kindly heart:
Are any poor, knowing that they do lie
Lapped in her light embraces silently?

The Heaven doth wear upon her holy breast
  The argent moon, her badge; her livery,
That is a royal, rich, and azure vest,
  Shows she doth serve a mighty majesty:
And a fair weed, purple and cinnamon,
She now above that silken vest doth on.

How might man image her in his own guise?
  As a crowned spirit quiet as forest lawns,
Void of all woes and of all sad surprise,
  Facing eternal sunsets and bright dawns,
And brooding o'er him that he may not mark
The outer tempests and the empty dark.

Ruth Pitter.

WOOD SONG

I heard a wood thrush in the dusk
  Twirl three notes and make a star—
My heart that walked with bitterness
  Came back from very far.

Three shining notes were all he had,
  And yet they made a starry call—
I caught life back against my breast
  And kissed it, scars and all.

Sara Teasdale.

IN DEVON NOW

The apple-trees in orchard-land
With ruddy fruit well-loaded stand:
Ripe apples fall from off the bough—
In Devon now.

Against the whitewashed cottage wall
The many sunflowers, straight and tall,
Lift golden cups, the reddest rose
In Devon blows.

The heather's fading on the hills,
But autumn's mellow sunlight fills
The brackens full as they can hold
Of Devon gold.

Oh! western land beside the sea,
Where'er I wander still to me
Come thoughts of orchard, fruit, and bough
In Devon now.

Edith Dart.

ON THE VALE OF BOZAA

The intertwining boughs for thee
Have wove, sweet dell, a verdant vest,
And thou in turn shalt give to me
A verdant couch upon thy breast.

To shield me from day's fervid glare
Thine oaks their fostering arms extend,
As anxious o'er her infant care
I've seen a watchful mother bend.

Ahmed Ben Yousef Almenazy.

A VIOLA D'AMORE, XVIth CENTURY

"When I was alive I was in the forest and silent; now that I am cut down and dead, I sing sweetly."

Long ago, my forest home forsaking,
  First I heard the harmonies of Life —
First my heart, contented silence breaking,
  Woke to sound beneath the carver's knife.

There upon the peak my spirit slumbered,
  Root-secure in that unboisterous spot;
Rain and sun went by in years unnumbered:
  I had joy of them, and knew it not.

Now for many years—years that are counted—
  I have seen the quiet hills no more,
And my soul is tremulous, thick-haunted
  With great stormy dreams undreamt before.

Long ago they cut and carved me finely;
  Since that day the soft command of song
Makes my silent heart burst out divinely
  With a comprehension full and strong.

For the Masters taught me their great passion,
  Taught me all the joys and wants of men,
Till I learnt to give, in wondrous fashion,
  All my lore in beauty back again;

All my lore of love and woe and grieving,
  All unuttered yearnings everywhere,
These I gathered and, with hope new-weaving,
  Made them magic-sweet upon the air.

Arthur Upson.

THE ROWAN TREE

O rowan tree, O rowan tree! thou'lt aye be dear to me!
Intwined thou art wi' mony ties o' hame and infancy.
Thy leaves were aye the first o' spring, thy flowers the simmer's pride;
There wasna sic a bonnie tree in a' the country side.
O rowan tree!

How fair wert thou in simmer time, wi' a' thy clusters white,
How rich and gay thy autumn dress, wi' berries red and bright!
On thy fair stem were mony names which now nae mair I see,
But they're engraven on my heart—forgot they ne'er can be!
O rowan tree!

We sat aneath thy spreading shade, the bairnies round thee ran,
They pu'd thy bonnie berries red, and necklaces they strang.
My mother! O I see her still, she smiled our sports to see,
Wi' little Jeanie on her lap, and Jamie at her knee.
O rowan tree!

O there arose my father's prayer, in holy evening's calm;
How sweet was then my mother's voice in the Martyr's psalm!
Now a' are gane! we meet nae mair aneath the rowan tree!
But hallowed thoughts around thee twine o' hame and infancy.
O rowan tree!

Lady C. Nairne.

O DREAMY, GLOOMY, FRIENDLY TREES!

Dreary, gloomy, friendly trees,
I came along your narrow track
To bring my gifts unto your knees
And gifts did you give back;
For when I brought this heart that burns —
These thoughts that bitterly repine —
And laid them here among the ferns
And the hum of boughs divine,
Ye, vastest breathers of the air,
Shook down with slow and mighty poise
Your coolness on the human care,
Your wonder on its toys,
Your greenness on the heart's despair,
Your darkness on its noise.

Herbert Trench.

THE TIMBER.

Sure thou didst flourish once! and many springs,
Many bright mornings, much dew, many showers,
Passed o'er thy head; many light hearts and wings,
Which now are dead, lodged in thy living bowers.

And still a new succession sings and flies;
Fresh groves up, and their green branches shoot
Towards the old and still enduring skies,
While the low violet thrives at their root.

But thou beneath the sad and heavy line
Of death dost waste all senseless, cold, and dark;
Where not so much as dreams of light may shine,
Nor any thought of greenness, leaf, or bark.

Henry Vaughan.

A NIGHT AMONG THE PINES

From Bleymard after dinner, although it was already late, I set out to scale a portion of the Lozère. An ill-marked stony drove-road guided me forward; and I met nearly half a dozen bullock-carts descending from the woods, each laden with a whole pine-tree for the winter's firing. At the top of the woods, which do not climb very high upon this cold ridge, I struck leftward by a path among the pines, until I hit on a dell of green turf, where a streamlet made a little spout over some stones to serve me for a water-tap. "In a more sacred or sequestered bower . . . nor nymph nor faunus haunted." The trees were not old, but they grew thickly round the glade: there was no outlook, except north-eastward upon distant hill-tops, or straight upward to the sky; and the encampment felt secure and private like a room. By the time I had made my arrangements and fed Modestine, the day was already beginning to decline. I buckled myself to the knees into my sack and made a hearty meal; and as soon as the sun went down I pulled my cap over my eyes and fell asleep.

Night is a dead monotonous period under a roof: but in the open world it passes lightly, with its stars and dews and perfumes, and the hours are marked by changes in the face of Nature. What seems a kind of temporal death to people choked between walls and curtains, is only a light and living slumber to the man who sleeps afield. All night long he can hear Nature breathing deeply and freely; even as she takes her rest, she turns and smiles; and there is one stirring hour unknown to those who dwell in houses, when a wakeful influence goes abroad over the sleeping hemisphere, and all the outdoor world are on their feet.

The outer world, from which we cower into our houses, seemed after all a gentle habitable place; and night after night a man's bed, it seemed, was laid and waiting for him in the fields, where God keeps an open house. I thought I had rediscovered one of those truths which are revealed to savages and hid from political economists: at the least, I had discovered a new pleasure for myself. And yet even while I was exulting in my solitude I became aware of a strange lack. I wished a companion to lie near me in the starlight, silent and not moving, but ever within touch. For there is a fellowship more quiet even than

solitude, and which, rightly understood, is solitude made perfect. And to live out of doors with the woman a man loves is of all lives the most complete and free.

When I awoke again, many of the stars had disappeared; only the stronger companions of the night still burned visibly overhead; and away towards the east I saw a faint haze of light upon the horizon, such as had been the Milky Way when I was last awake. Day was at hand. The blue darkness lay long in the glade where I had so sweetly slumbered; but soon there was a broad streak of orange melting into gold along the mountain-tops of Vivarais. A solemn glee possessed my mind at this gradual and lovely coming in of day. I heard the runnel with delight; I looked round me for something beautiful and unexpected; but the still black pine-trees, the hollow glade, the munching ass, remained unchanged in figure. Nothing had altered but the light, and that, indeed, shed over all a spirit of life and of breathing peace, and moved me to a strange exhilaration.

Ten minutes later, the sunlight spread at a gallop along the hillside, scattering shadows and sparkles, and the day had come completely.

I hastened to prepare my pack, and tackle the steep ascent that lay before me; but I had something on my mind. It was only a fancy; yet a fancy will sometimes be importunate. I had been most hospitably received and punctually served in my green caravanserai. The room was airy, the water excellent, and the dawn had called me to a moment. I say nothing of the tapestries or the inimitable ceiling, nor yet of the view which I commanded from the windows; but I felt I was in some one's debt for all this liberal entertainment. And so it pleased me, in a half-laughing way, to leave pieces of money on the turf as I went along, until I had left enough for my night's lodging. I trust they did not fall to some rich and churlish drover.

R. L. Stevenson.

AGAINST FELLING TREES

When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them; for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege.

Deuteronomy 20—xix.

THE TREE

Fair tree, for thy delightful shade
'Tis just that some return be made;
Sure, some return is due from me
To thy cool shadows and to thee.
When thou to birds dost shelter give
Thou music dost from them receive;
If travellers beneath thee stay
Till storms have worn themselves away,
That time in praising thee they spend,
And thy protecting power commend;
The shepherd here, from scorching freed,
Tunes to thy dancing leaves his reed,
Whilst his loved nymph, in thanks, bestows
Her flowery chaplets on thy boughs.
Shall I then only silent be,
And no return be made by me?
No! let this wish upon thee wait,
And still to flourish be thy fate;
To future ages mayst thou stand
Untouched by the rash workman's hand,
Till that large stock of sap is spent
Which gives thy summer's ornament;
Till the fierce winds, that vainly strive
To shock thy greatness whilst alive,
Shall on thy lifeless hour attend,
Prevent the axe, and grace thy end,
Their scattered strength together call
And to the clouds proclaim thy fall;
Who then their evening dews may spare,
When thou no longer art their care,
But shalt, like ancient heroes, burn,
And some bright hearth be made thy urn.

Anne, Countess of Winchilsea.

THIS LIME-TREE BOWER MY PRISON

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,
This lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost
Beauties and feelings, such as would have been
Most sweet to my remembrance even when age
Had dimmed mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile,
Friends, whom I never more may meet again,
On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,
Wandering gladness, and wind down, perchance,
To that still roaring dell, of which I told;
The roaring dell, o'er wooded, narrow, deep,
And only speckled by the mid-day sun;
Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
Flings arching like a bridge;—that branchless ash,
Unsunned and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves
Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,
Fanned by the water-fall! and there my friends
Behold the dark green file of long lank weeds,
That all at once (a most fantastic sight!)
Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge
Of the blue clay-stone.

Now my friends, emerge
Beneath the wide, wide Heaven — and view again
The many steepled track magnificent
Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up
The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two isles
Of purple shadow! Yes! they wander on
In gladness all; but thou, methinks, most glad,
My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined
And hungered after Nature, many a year,
In the great City pent, winning thy way
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain
And strange calamity! Ah! slowly sink
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my friend
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,

Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
Spirits perceive his presence.
A delight
Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad
As I myself were there! Nor in this bower,
This little lime-tree bower, have I not marked
Much that has soothed me. Pale beneath the blaze
Hung the transparent foliage; and I watched
Some broad and sunny leaf and loved to see
The shadow of the leaf and loved to see
The shadow of the leaf and stem above,
Dappling its sunshine! And that walnut tree
Was richly tinged, and a deep radiance lay
Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps
Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass
Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
Through the late twilight: And though now the bat
Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,
Yet still the solitary humble-bee
Sings in the bean-flower! Henceforth I shall know
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;
No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
No waste so vacant, but may well employ
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes
'Tis well to be bereft of promised good,
That we may lift the soul, and contemplate
With lively joy the joys we cannot share.
My gentle-hearted Charles! when the last rock
Beat its straight path along the dusky air
Homewards, I blest it! deeming its black wing
(Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)
Had cross'd the mighty orb's dilated glory,
Whilst thou stood'st gazing; or when all was still,
Flew creeking o'er thy head, and had a charm
For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom
No sound is dissonant which tells of Life.

S. T. Coleridge.

THE AXE

High grew the snow beneath the low-hung sky,
And all was silent in the wilderness;
In trance of stillness Nature heard her God
Rebuilding her spent fires, and veiled her face
While the Great Worker brooded o'er His work.

"Bite deep and wide, O Axe, the tree!
What doth thy bold voice promise me?"

"For every silver ringing blow,
Cities and palaces shall grow!"

"Bite deep and wide, O Axe, the tree!
Tell wider prophecies to me."

"When rust hath gnawed me deep and red,
A nation strong shall lift his head.

"His crown the very Heavens shall smite,
Æons shall build him in his might!"

"Bite deep and wide, O Axe, the tree;
Bright Seer, help on thy prophecy!"

Max smote the snow-weighed tree, and lightly laughed.
"See, friend," he cried to one that looked and smiled,
"My axe and I—we do immortal tasks—
We build up nations—this my axe and I!"

Isabella Valancey Crawford.

AT EVENING I CAME TO THE WOOD

At evening I came to the wood, and threw myself on the breast
Of the great green Mother, weeping, and the arms of a thousand trees
Waved and rustled in welcome, and murmured, "Rest—Rest—Rest!
The leaves, thy brothers, shall heal thee, and thy sisters, the flowers, bring peace."

At length I stayed from my weeping, and lifted my face from the grass;
The moon was walking the wood, with feet of mysterious pearl,
And the great trees held their breath, trance-like, watching her pass,
And a bird called out of the shadows, with voice as sweet as a girl.
And then, in the holy silence, to the great green Mother I prayed:
"Take me again to thy bosom, thy son who so close to thee
Aforetime, filial, clung; then into the city strayed—
The painted face of the town, the wine and the harlotry.

"Bathe me in lustral dawns, and the morning star, and the dew;
Make pure my heart as a bird, and innocent as a flower,
Make sweet my thoughts as the meadow mint—O make me all anew—
And in the strength of beech and oak gird up my will with power.

"I have wandered far, O my Mother, but here I return at the last,
Never again to stray in pilgrimage wanton and wild;
A broken heart and a contrite here at thy feet I cast,
O take me back to thy bosom!"—and the Mother murmured, "Child."

Richard Le Gallienne.

THE TREASURY OF THE YEAR

"Where is the Dryad's immortality?—
Gone into the mournful cypress and dark yew,
Or wearing the long gloomy Winter through
In the smooth holly's green eternity."

Thomas Hood.

"October earth, with scarlet maple-leaf,
With oak-leaves brown, with flaming leaves and pale;
Mysterious Autumn, symbol of all grief,
Symbol of lives that die and hopes that fail."

Conrad Aiken.

A LYRIC OF FALLING LEAVES

They cry as they fly:
"We are free—we are free—we are free!
Old boughs where we hung, good-bye!
You clung to us long, for you bore us;
Naught now to your arms shall restore us;
At last we are free—we are free!

"In the spring we were born,
In the year's blithe morn,
And the forest rejoiced at our birth;
And the sunbeams played
All day with the shade
We myriad made on the earth.

"We were little and fragile and tender and green,
(How loud is the call of the golden-wing!)
And the musical rain and the glittering sheen
Of the great white stars could filter between
And drip to the earth below.
(How wind-flowers shake to the breezes that pass!
And oh—the spring-beauties that powder the grass
Like a flurry of pink-flushed snow!)
Sweet, sweet was the smell of the world in spring!
Sweet was the sound and the touch of the spring!
And we danced where we hung,
And we sang as we clung;
And fairer and broader and greener we grew,
The long glad weeks of the Maytime through;
Nor knew we at all that we were not free.

"Was it June?
Was it oriole's rune
As he flashed like a flower of gold?
Was it something the low wind told,
Some night when the air was wine,
And the moon was ashine
In the blue vault, dark and vast,
And we held up our hands to be filled
With the pure white light that she spilled

From her silvery urn as she passed?
Was it call of the sea
From a sea-gull's throat?
Was it thrush's note?
Was it breath from the fields of grain
That rippled and broke in the blast
Like the waves of the windy main?
Was it hope? Was it prophecy?

"One knows! Not we—not we!
But we knew, on a day, like the young
Of the lark that grow tired of the nest
And stir in a dawning unrest,
We knew that we were not free!
Not free like the gold-finch above us that sung—
Not free like the clouds in the sky—
Not free like the winds that go by!

"Were we sad that we were not free?
Nay—nay!
It was sweet to stay;
And Life was good
In the dear green wood;
And we whispered and fluttered and sang as of yore—
But we dreamed, which we never had done before;
We dreamed of liberty.

" 'Some day you shall go!' they said—
The branches, our gray-breasted mothers—
'Some day when the summer is dead!'
How closely they held us, O brothers!
We cried to a wind that went through:
'Some day! we shall journey with you!
Some day!' sighed our sorrowful mothers.

"And all through the summer we hung there,
Content in our curtained green peace;
But all through the weeks that we clung there,
We dreamed of our promised release.

"It has come as we dreamed it, O brothers!
One passed with his torch in the night;
And to-day we are all alight
With tintings and colorings manifold,
With orange, vermilion and gold—
The garments prepared for our flight.

"One passed in the night;
And he bade us: Be free!
'Lean now on the wings of the blast
If you will!
On fall on the hurrying rill
And ride on its breast to the sea!
Behold—you are free at last!'

"Oh the joy of our liberty, brothers!
O sorrowing mothers,
Farewell—we are gone from the breast!
We follow the call of unrest!

"We ride on the winds that are blowing,
Unheeding, unknowing
The place they are going.
O'er the shivering grass
We race with the shadows of clouds as they pass.
We rise—we rise—
In the arms of the gale!
Against the gray skies
We drive and we sail!
O brothers, the joy of being free!
Our life was sweet on the gray old tree,
But our death, our death is our liberty!"

Marian Warner Wildman.

THE FALLING LEAVES

When the sun sets all too soon beyond the mountains and the western skies are flooded with pallid crimson:

When the trees stand naked and black against the afterglow and the evening star shines high above the gathering mists of twilight:

When the earth is chilled by sweeping winds: when the water of the pools lies dead and silent and the last leaves drop, one by one, from the trees:

The naiads forsake the springs, the syrinx of the satyrs is heard no more and the dryads, deep in the hearts of the trees, whimper and wrap themselves in the shelter of their long, dark hair.

And I—I stand alone in the vast solitude—and tremble.

Mitchell S. Buck.

THE FALL OF THE LEAF

The evening of the year draws on,
  The fields a later aspect wear;
Since Summer's garishness is gone,
  Some grains of night tincture the noontide air.

Behold! the shadows of the trees
  Now circle wider 'bout their stem,
Like sentries that by slow degrees
  Perform their rounds, gently protecting them.

And as the year doth decline,
  The sun allows a scantier light;
Behind each needle of the pine
  There lurks a small auxiliar to the night.

I hear the cricket's slumbrous lay
  Around, beneath me, and on high;
It rocks the night, it soothes the day,
  And everywhere is Nature's lullaby.

But most he chirps beneath the sod,
When he has made his winter bed;
His creak grown fainter but more broad,
A film of Autumn o'er the Summer spread.

Small birds, in fleets migrating by,
Now beat across some meadow's bay,
And as they tack and veer on high,
With faint and hurried click beguile the way.

Far in the woods, these golden days,
Some leaf obeys its Maker's call;
And through their hollow aisles it plays
With delicate touch the prelude of the Fall.

Gently withdrawing from its stem,
It likely lays itself along
Where the same hand hath pillowed them,
Resign to sleep upon the old year's throng.

The loneliest birch is brown and sere,
The furthest pool is strewn with leaves,
Which float upon their watery bier,
Where is no eye that sees, no heart that grieves.

The jay screams through the chestnut wood;
The crisped and yellow leaves around
Are hue and texture of my mood,—
And these rough burrs my heirlooms on the ground.

The threadbare trees, so poor and thin,—
They are no wealthier than I;
But with as brave a core within
They rear their boughs to the October sky.

Poor knights they are which bravely wait
The charge of Winter's cavalry,
Keeping a simple Roman state,
Discumbered of their Persian luxury.

H. D. Thoreau.

LATE LEAVES

The leaves are falling; so am I;
The few late flowers have moisture in the eye;
So have I too.
Scarcely on any bough is heard
Joyous, or even unjoyous, bird
The whole wood through.

Winter may come: he brings but nigher
His circle (yearly narrowing) to the fire
Where old friends meet.
Let him; now heaven is overcast,
And spring and summer both are past,
And all things sweet.

W. S. Landor.

DEAD LEAVES

The varied colours are a fitful heap:
They pass in constant service though they sleep;
The self gone out of them, therewith the pain:
Read that, who still to spell our earth remain.

George Meredith.

DEAD LEAVES

Not Summer's crown of scent the red rose weaves,
Not hawthorn perfume blown o'er bloom-strewn grass,
Not violet's whispers as the children pass,
Nor new-mown hay, crisp scent of yellow sheaves,
Nor lilac perfume in the soft May eves,
Nor any scent that Springtime can amass,
Or Summer squander, such a magic has
As scent of fresh wet earth and fallen leaves.

For sometimes lovers, in November days,
When earth is grieving for the vanished sun
Have trod dead leaves in chill and wintry ways,
And kissed and dreamed eternal summer won.
Look back, look back! through memory's deepening haze,
See—two who dreamed that dream, and you were one!

Ethel Nesbit Bland.

A LAMENT FOR THE LEAVES

The trees look sad—sad—I long for the leaves,
Green leaves that shimmer—and shelter the nests that the song-birds make.
The earth is glad—glad—but my spirit grieves.
Break forth from your buds and awake
O! leaves!

I remember the woods last year and the thick fresh leaves
How they fluttered and flickered and sighed, rustled and quivered all day. . . .
I almost fancy I hear their song to the breeze,
The fickle breeze that faltered and wavered, but would not stay.
I long for the leaves!

I remember the sun-laced grass, where their shadows were flung
In a tangled web as they trembled—trembled a-tilt on the bough,
Now! they are fallen, alas! from the trees where they hung,
Withered, wind-wafted away. . . . O! where are they now,
The leaves?

Olive Custance (Lady Douglas).

WINDS AND LEAVES

Wet winds that flap the sodden leaves!
Wet leaves that drop and fall!
Unhappy, leafless trees the wind bereaves!
Poor trees and small!

All of a color, solemn in your green;
All of a color, sombre in your brown;
All of a color, dripping gray between
When leaves are down!

O for the bronze-green eucalyptus spires
Far-flashing up against the endless blue,
Shifting and glancing in the steady fires
Of sun and moonlight too.

Dark orange groves! Pomegranate hedges bright,
And varnished fringes of the pepper trees!
And O that wind of sunshine! Wind of light!
Wind of Pacific seas!

Charlotte Perkins Stetson

TREE SPIRIT

(*A Ramble in the Forest*)

Let us bury the old fallen leaves
Under the shadow of leaves, tender, green.

Awake from winter's dream-road,
Come to this forest of Spring.

Shimazaki.

THE LAST LEAF

For my heart had a touch of the woodland time,
Wanting to sleep now over its best.
Shake the whole tree in the summer-prime,
But bring to the last leaf no such test!
"Hold the last fast!" runs the rhyme.

For a chance to make your little much,
To gain a lover and lose a friend,
Venture the tree and a myriad such,
When nothing you mar but the year can mend:
But a last leaf—fear to touch!

Yet should it unfasten itself and fall
Eddying down till it find your face
At some slight wind—best chance of all!
Be your heart henceforth its dwelling-place
You trembled to forestall!

Robert Browning.

INDIAN SUMMER

The old gray year is near his term in sooth,
And now with backward eye and soft-laid palm
Awakens to a golden dream of youth,
A second childhood lovely and most calm,
And the smooth hour about his misty head
An awning of enchanted splendour weaves,
Of maples, amber, purple, and rose-red,
And droop-limbed elms down-drooping golden leaves.
With still half-fallen lids he sits and dreams
Far in a hollow of the sunlit wood,
Lulled by the murmur of thin-threading streams,
Nor sees the polar armies overflood
The darkening barriers of the hills, nor hears
The north-wind ringing with a thousand spears.

Archibald Lampman.

AUTUMN

The trees and herbage, as the year doth wane,
For gold and russet leave their former hue,—
All but the wave-toss'd flow'rets of the main
That never yet chill Autumn's empire knew.

Yasuhide.

AUTUMN MAPLE-TREES

E'en when on earth the thund'ring gods held sway
Was such a sight beheld?—Calm Tatsuta's flood,
Stain'd, as by Chinese art, with hues of blood,
Rolls o'er Yamato's peaceful fields away.

Narihira.

IN OCTOBER

Along the waste, a great way off, the pines
  Like tall slim priests of storm, stand up and bar
The low long strip of dolorous red that lines
  The under west, where wet winds moan afar,
The cornfields all are brown, and brown the meadows
  With the blown leaves' wind-heapèd traceries,
And the brown thistle stems that cast no shadows,
  And bear no bloom for bees.

As slowly earthward leaf by red leaf slips,
The sad trees rustle in chill misery,
A soft strange inner sound of pain-crazed lips,
That move and murmur incoherently;
As if all leaves, that yet have breath, were sighing,
With pale hushed throats, for death is at the door,
So many low soft masses for the dying
Sweet leaves that live no more.

Here I will sit upon this naked stone,
Draw my coat closer with my numbèd hands,
And hear the ferns sigh, and the wet woods moan,
And send my heart out to the ashen lands;
And I will ask myself what golden madness,
What balmèd breaths of dreamland spicery,
What visions of soft laughter and light sadness
Were sweet last month to me.

The dry dead leaves flit by with thin weird tunes,
Like failing murmurs of some conquered creed,
Graven in mystic markings with strange runes,
That none but stars and biting winds may read;
Here I will wait a little; I am weary,
Not torn with pain of any lurid hue,
But only still and very gray and dreary,
Sweet sombre lands, like you

Archibald Lampman.

TO BLOSSOMS

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do you fall so fast?
Your date is not so past;
But you may stay here yet a while,
To blush and gently smile;
And go at last.

What, were ye born to be,
An hour or half's delight,
And so to bid good-night?
'Twas pity nature brought ye forth,
Merely to show your worth,
And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave:
And after they have shown their pride
Like you a while, they glide
Into the grave.

Robert Herrick.

BARE RUIN'D CHOIRS

That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold, do hang
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

Shakespeare.

Every pine and fir and hemlock
  Wore ermine too dear for an earl,
And the poorest twig on the elm-tree
  Was ridged inch-deep with pearl.

James Russell Lowell.

FEUILLES D'AUTOMNE

Silence and chill; the beeches stand aflare
'Twixt pallid elm and pine no years despoil.
The golden bracken rusts, and sere and bare
The chilling brambles coil.

Upon the burnished footing of a glade,
Thin as a smoke a phantom shape arose,
Who peered and muttered as a man dismayed
"Where are my foes?"

Another flickered by his side, who said,
"Brother, be comforted, thy foes are gone,
Sailed from us long ago and left their dead.
For I was one.

"Our ways are done, our battles at an end,
Conquest nor overthrows, delights nor grieves,
Let us lie down again as friend with friend
Under the leaves."

I heard no more. The branches dripped, the sun
Sank without flames and closed an autumn day.
While through the mist the dead leaves one by one
Flutter into decay.

Lucy Lyttelton.

A BEECH-WOOD IN OCTOBER

Beneath the ancient beeches, cloth of gold
For Autumn's regal passing has been laid.
Gold sunbeams pierce the thinning golden shade,
Where wider glimpses of blue sky unfold.

No bird sings here; and never light wind blows
To stir the leafy curtains, golden brown,
But still the ripened leaves drift slowly down,
And still the carpet softer, thicker grows.

Among the beeches Autumn does not die
In crimson passion or in scarlet pain;
Here only peace and golden silence reign,
June dreams forgotten—winter fears put by.

So would I die, O beeches! When at last
My days are numbered like your ripened leaves,
I would not be as one who idly grieves,
And mourns the glories of the summer past.

In peace and golden silence I would lie,
Still gazing upward through the thinning gold,
Until the last leaf fell, and there—behold!
Beyond the lifeless boughs, God's open sky!

Marian Warner Wildman.

AUTUMN WOODS

Ere, in the northern gale,
The summer tresses of the trees are gone,
The woods of Autumn, all around our vale,
Have put their glory on.

The mountains that infold,
In their wide sweep, the colored landscape round,
Seem groups of giant kings, in purple and gold,
That guard the enchanted ground.

I roam the woods that crown
The uplands, where the mingled splendors glow,
Where the gay company of trees look down
On the green fields below.

My steps are not alone
In these bright walks; the sweet southwest, at play,
Flies, rustling, where the painted leaves are strown
Along the winding way.

And far in heaven, the while,
The sun, that sends that gale to wander here,
Pours out on the fair earth his quiet smile—
The sweetest of the year.

Where now the solemn shade,
Verdure and gloom where many branches meet;
So grateful, when the noon of summer made
The valleys sick with heat?

Let in through all the trees
Come the strange rays; the forest depths are bright;
Their sunny colored foliage, in the breeze,
Twinkles, like beams of light.

The rivulet, late unseen,
Where bickering through the shrubs its waters run,
Shines with the image of its golden screen,
And glimmerings of the sun.

But 'neath yon crimson tree,
Lover to listening maid might breathe his flame,
Nor mark, within its roseate canopy,
Her blush of maiden shame.

Oh, Autumn! why so soon
Depart the hues that make thy forests glad,
Thy gentle wind and thy fair sunny noon,
And leave thee wild and sad!

Ah! 'twere a lot too blest
Forever in thy colored shades to stray;
Amid the kisses of the soft southwest
To roam and dream for aye;

And leave the vain low strife
That makes men mad—the tug for wealth and power—
The passions and the cares that wither life,
And waste its little hour.

William Cullen Bryant.

FADING AUTUMN

Th' autumnal glories all have passed away;
The forest-leaves no more in hectic red
Give glowing tokens of their brief decay,
But scattered lie, or rustle at the tread,
Like whispered warnings from the mouldering dead;
The naked trees stretch out their arms all day,
And each bald hill-top lifts its reverend head
As if for some new covering to pray.
Come, Winter, then, and spread thy robe of white
Above the desolation of this scene;
And when the sun with gems shall make it bright,
Or, when its snowy folds by midnight's queen
Are silvered o'er with a serener light,
We'll cease to sigh for summer's living green.

Mrs. E. C. Kinney.

THE WOODMAN AND THE NIGHTINGALE

A Woodman whose rough heart was out of tune
(I think such hearts yet never came to good)
Hated to hear, under the stars or moon,

One nightingale in an interfluous wood
Satiate the hungry dark with melody;—
And as a vale is watered by a flood,

Or as the moonlight fills the open sky
Struggling with darkness—as a tuberose
Peoples some Indian dell with scents which lie

Like clouds above the flower from which they rose,
The singing of that happy nightingale
In this sweet forest, from the golden close

Of evening till the star of dawn may fail,
Was interfused upon the silentness;
The folded roses and the violets pale

Heard her within their slumbers, the abyss
Of heaven with all its planets; the dull ear
Of the night-cradled earth; the loneliness

Of the circumfluous waters,—every sphere
And every flower and beam and cloud and wave,
And every wind of the mute atmosphere,

And every beast stretcht in its rugged cave,
And every bird lulled on its mossy bough,
And every silver moth fresh from the grave,

Which is its cradle—ever from below
Aspiring like one who loves too fair, too far,
To be consumed within the purest glow

Of one serene and unapproachèd star,
As if it were a lamp of earthly light,
Unconscious, as some human lovers are,

Itself how low, how high beyond all height
The heaven where it would perish!—And every form
That worshipt in the temple of the night

Was awed into delight, and by the charm
Girt as with an interminable zone,
Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm

Of sound, shook forth the dull oblivion
Out of their dreams; harmony became love
In every soul but one.

. . . . . .

And so this man returned with axe and saw
At evening close from killing the tall treen,
The soul of whom by nature's gentle law

Was each a wood-nymph, and kept ever green
The pavement and the roof of the wild copse,
Checkering the sunlight of the blue serene

With jagged leaves,—and from the forest tops
Singing the winds to sleep—or weeping oft
Fast showers of aerial water drops

Into their mother's bosom, sweet and soft,
Nature's pure tears which have no bitterness;—
Around the cradles of the birds aloft

They spread themselves into the loveliness
Of fan-like leaves, and over pallid flowers
Hang like moist clouds:—or, where high branches kiss,

Make a green space among the silent bowers,
Like a vast fane in a metropolis,
Surrounded by the columns and the towers

All overwrought with branch-like traceries
In which there is religion—and the mute
Persuasion of unkindled melodies,

Odors and gleams and murmurs, which the lute
Of the blind pilot-spirit of the blast
Stirs as it sails, now grave and now acute,
Wakening the leaves and waves, ere it has past
To such brief unison as on the brain
One tone, which never can recur, has cast,
One accent never to return again.

. . . . . .

The world is full of Woodmen who expel
Love's gentle Dryads from the haunts of life,
And vex the nightingales in every dell.

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

DIRGE IN WOODS

A wind sways the pines,
And below
Not a breath of wild air;
Still as the mosses that glow
On the flooring and over the lines
Of the roots here and there.

The pine-tree drops its dead;
They are quiet, as under the sea.
Overhead, overhead

Rushes life in a race,
As the clouds the clouds chase;
And we go,
And we drop like the fruits of the tree,
Even we,
Even so.

George Meredith.

THE OAK

Live thy life,
Young and old,
Live yon oak,
Bright in Spring,
Living gold;

Summer-rich
Then; and then
Autumn-changed,
Soberer-hued
Gold again.

All his leaves
Fallen at length,
Look, he stands
Trunk and bough,
Naked strength.

Tennyson.

ELEGY

The wood is bare: a river-mist is steeping
The trees that winter's chill of life bereaves:
Only their stiffened boughs break silence, weeping
Over their fallen leaves;

That lie upon the dank earth brown and rotten,
Miry and matted in the soaking wet:
Forgotten with the spring, that is forgotten
By them that can forget.

Yet it was here we walked when ferns were springing,
And through the mossy bank shot bud and blade:—
Here found in summer, when the birds were singing,
A green and pleasant shade.

'Twas here we loved in sunnier days and greener;
And now, in this disconsolate decay,
I come to see her where I most have seen her,
And touch the happier day.

For on this path, at every turn and corner,
The fancy of her figure on me falls:
Yet walks she with the slow step of a mourner,
Nor hears my voice that calls.

So through my heart there winds a track of feeling,
A path of memory, that is all her own:
Whereto her phantom beauty ever stealing
Haunts the sad spot alone.

About her steps the trunks are bare, the branches
Drip heavy tears upon her downcast head;
And bleed from unseen wounds that no sun stanches,
For the year's sun is dead.

The dead leaves wrap the fruits that summer planted:
And birds that love the South have taken wing.
The Wanderer, loitering o'er the scene enchanted,
Weeps, and despairs of spring.

Robert Bridges.

THE LAST LEAF

I saw him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said—
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago—
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow;

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

BURNT LANDS

On other fields and other scenes the morn
Laughs from her blue, but not such scenes are these,
Where comes no cheer of Summer leaves and bees,
And no shade mitigates the day's white scorn.
These serious acres vast no groves adorn;
But giant trunks, bleak shapes that once were trees,
Tower naked, unassuaged of rain or breeze,
Their stern gray isolation grimly borne.
The months roll over them, and mark no change;
But when spring stirs, or autumn stills, the year,
Perchance some phantom leafage rustles faint
Throught their parched dreams,—some old-time notes ring strange,
When in his slender treble, far and clear,
Reiterates the rain-bird his complaint.

Charles G. D. Roberts.

LEAVES

When God the leaves of summer made
He left their surface dull
And non-reflecting, that their shade
Our wearied eyes may lull.

The oak, the elm, the beech, the ash,
Have not a leaf that gleams,
They can not catch and onward flash
The sun's most searching beams.

And as He shades us from the glare
He minds us, too, in cold;
And glazes winter leaves with care
To make them shine like gold.

The holly leaves, they all reflect
The light from bank and hedge,
And ivies that the walls protect
Make gold their every ledge.

But ivy does not lend her leaves
To wall and tor alone,
She rambles through the woods and weaves
Her wreaths on trunk and stone.

It thrills my heart that God should choose
To make the winter bright,
And fear lest we poor mortals lose
One single ray of light.

Beatrice Chase.

THE HAUNTED OAK

Pray, why are you so bare, so bare,
Oh, bough of the old oak-tree;
And why, when I go through the shade you throw,
Runs a shudder over me?

My leaves were green as the best, I trow,
And sap ran free in my veins,
But I saw in the moonlight dim and weird
A guiltless victim's pains.

I bent me down to hear his sigh;
I shook with his gurgling moan,
And I trembled sore when they rode away,
And left him here alone.

They'd charged him with the old, old crime,
And set him fast in jail:
Oh, why does the dog howl all night long,
And why does the night wind wail?

He prayed his prayer and he swore his oath,
And he raised his hand to the sky;
But the beat of hoofs smote on his ear,
And the steady tread drew nigh.

Who is it rides by night, by night,
Over the moonlit road?
And what is the spur that keeps the pace,
What is the galling goad?

And now they beat at the prison door,
"Ho, keeper, do not stay!
We are friends of him whom you hold within,
And we fain would take him away

"From those who ride fast on our heels
With mind to do him wrong;
They have no care for his innocence,
And the rope they bear is long."

They have fooled the jailer with lying words,
They have fooled the man with lies;
The bolts unbar, the locks are drawn,
And the great door open flies.

Now they have taken him from the jail,
And hard and fast they ride,
And the leader laughs low down in his throat,
As they halt my trunk beside.

Oh, the judge, he wore a mask of black,
And the doctor one of white,
And the minister, with his oldest son,
Was curiously bedight.

Oh, foolish man, why weep you now?
'Tis but a little space,
And the time will come when these shall dread
The mem'ry of your face.

I feel the rope against my bark,
And the weight of him in my grain,
I feel in the throe of his final woe
The touch of my own last pain.

And never more shall leaves come forth
On a bough that bears the ban;
I am burned with dread, I am dried and dead,
From the curse of a guiltless man.

And ever the judge rides by, rides by,
And goes to hunt the deer,
And ever another rides his soul
In the guise of a mortal fear.

And ever the man he rides me hard,
And never a night stays he;
For I feel his curse as a haunted bough,
On the trunk of a haunted tree.

Paul Laurence Dunbar.

ELEGY

One thing, alas! More fleeting have I seen
Than wither'd leaves driv'n by the autumn gust:
Yea, evanescent as the whirling dust
Is man's brief passage o'er this mortal scene!

Chisato.

Forest was planted above forest and destroyed, as if Nature were ever repenting, undoing the work she had so industriously done, and burying it.

Of course this destruction was creation, progress in the march of beauty through death. How quickly these old monuments excite and hold the imagination! We see the old stone stumps budding and blossoming and waving in the wind as magnificent trees, standing shoulder to shoulder, branches interlacing in grand varied round-headed forests; see the sunshine of morning and evening gilding their mossy trunks and at high noon spangling on the thick glossy leaves of the magnolia, filtering through translucent canopies of linden and ash, and falling in mellow patches on the ferny floor; see the shining after rain,

breathe the exhaling fragrance, and hear the winds and birds and the murmur of brooks and insects. We watch them from season to season; see the swelling buds when the sap begins to flow in the spring, the opening leaves and blossoms, the ripening of summer fruits, the colors of autumn, and the maze of leafless branches and sprays in winter; and we see the sudden oncome of the storms that overwhelmed them.

One calm morning at sunrise I saw the oaks and pines in Yosemite Valley shapen by an earthquake, their tops swishing back and forth and every branch and needle shuddering as if in distress like the frightened, screaming birds. One may imagine the trembling, rocking, tumultuous waving of those ancient Yellowstone woods, and the terror of their inhabitants when the first foreboding shocks were felt, the sky grew dark, and rock-laden floods began to roar. But though they were close pressed and buried, cut off from sun and wind, all their happy leaf-fluttering and waving done, other currents coursed through them, fondling and thrilling every fibre, and beautiful wood was replaced by beautiful stone. Now their rocky sepulchres are partly open, and show forth the natural beauty of death.

John Muir.

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